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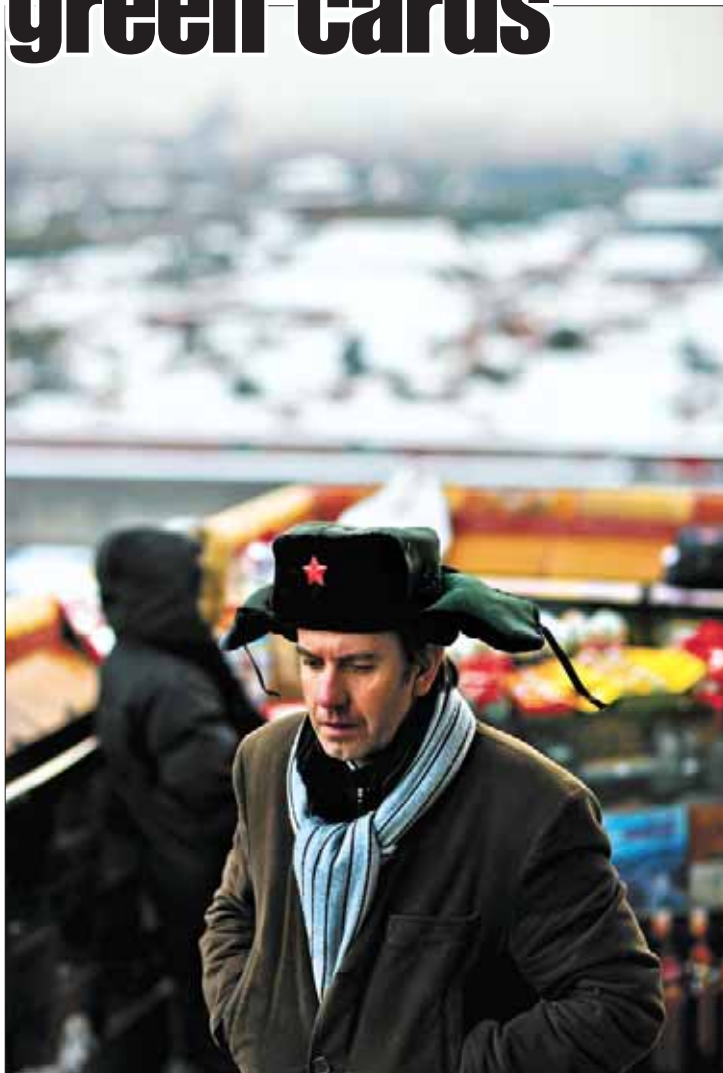
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北京青年报
BEIJING YOUTH DAILY

Expats blue over green cards



Thought your work visa was challenging to get? Try pursuing a green card. The creation of a Chinese permanent residency certificate, or green card, in 2004 was a milestone in immigration law. But five years later, the document remains elusive. Many complain that the process for obtaining permanent residence is needlessly complicated and the qualifications are tough to meet. But officials in charge say things may be improving.

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National Internet TV Station goes live

By Wang Yu

CNTV, the national Web TV, went online Monday with support from China Central Television (CCTV). It is the biggest state-owned source of online programming with entirely legal content.

Compared with private video sites, CNTV is simple and has only one main flash-display window under its banner. It updates to recommend the latest news clips and programs. Its five Web channels are news, sports, entertainment, Bugu and Xiyou.

Bugu provides video services including live online broadcasts, video on demand, and round-the-clock replays that work similar to other popular video sites. Xiyou is an online community that allows users to upload original videos.

Xia Xiaohui, vice president of CCTV.com, said the new online video service can provide TV programs from any of CCTV's 20 channels and offers 750 hours of programming each day. New programs are being made by the parents studio for online broadcast only. Its archive is slowly being updated to include all 400,000 hours of programming made by CCTV over the last several years.

Li Changchun, a member of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China Central Committee, said at the site's opening ceremony that, mainstream media must actively expand to new media to reach more people.

Five overseas mirrors are available in Europe, North America, Southeast Asia, the



Website of cntv.cn, known as CNTV

IC Photo

Middle East and Russia. An announcement on the website said business and TV dramas will be available later this year.

Next year, CCTV will add more sections to cover education, music, shopping, cars and games.

Last December, the State Administration of Radio, Film and Television (SARFT) crushed most of the country's popular peer-to-peer download sites. Popular BitTorrent sharing sites were blocked, and another 500 sites were shut down for having pirated or "pornographic" content.

New regulations by the government require operators of Chinese video sites to obtain a government license: licenses are only available to state-owned or state-controlled companies.

But CNTV faces stiff competition in the industry. Its Xiyou and Bugu channels are clones of two common video services: video-sharing sites and video on demand. Most of the

established sites like Tudou and Youku said that while CNTV bring unwanted competition, it may make government interference in the industry less random.

"I think private sites may end up cooperating with state-owned business," said Lu Wensheng, CEO of Joy.cn. He also said CNTV's requirement of legal content may make the competition fairer than before.

The variety of programs of CNTV pressures live broadcasters like PPLive and PPS. Xu Weifeng, CEO of PPS, said old media rarely integrated well in the cyber landscape, and whether or not the new site is a failure remains too early to be known.

"Content is what creates an audience. Since file sharing remains under assault, I will only be looking for sites that host my favorite foreign shows," said Vincent Wen, a programmer who dumped his TV for a life on the Web.

New law changes privacy, copyright on the Web

By Zhao Hongyi

The China Written Works Copyright Society formally brought charges against Google this week for including copyrighted works by Chinese authors in its online library.

Google said it wants to settle the dispute out of court, but the Society promised to seek legal recourse. A preliminary hearing may be held before the month is over.

The case would not be the first time GoogleBooks landed the Mountain View Internet giant in court. Last year, French publisher La Martiniere was awarded €300,000 (2.9 million yuan) when it won a lawsuit against Google for publishing copyrighted French works.

How to resolve cases of copyright and privacy violation has become tougher as the Internet expands: the Web is a venue long popular for exposing the failures, problems and difficulties of others for legions of anonymous voyeurs.

To that end, the National Congress approved its Law of Infringement Responsibility on December 26. The law allows individuals who are the victims of copyright infringement or privacy violation to notify websites and request the deletion of offending content. Web hosts that refuse to comply with takedown requests may be held liable as an accessory to infringement.

The new law was called one of the two most important laws recently approved – the other law being the Pri-

vate Property Law.

"The newly passed law stresses the obligation and responsibility to protect an individual's privacy," Hu Yong, a professor of communications at Peking University, said. "It's very important in China today as infringement of privacy has become a serious problem."

In summer 2009, the central government praised netizens for using the Web to expose the corruption and crimes of petty officials. But often times, the medium became a platform for vengeful libel.

But some worry abuse of the new law may interfere with efforts to stamp out corruption.

"It is not a step back," Hu said. "The new law is targeting users who abuse the Internet for libelous retaliation or commercial gain."

"The new law places the burden of supervising and evaluating content on the website managers," the *Beijing Youth Daily* commented. "It is also their responsibility to cooperate with requests to delete those libelous statements or materials that infringe on copyright."

That could present a problem when busting an official.

"Often the netizens don't have access to or a way to post concrete evidence," a netizen on kdnet.net complained. "But I believe they should have a right to share their suspicions."

The new law also confirmed the rights of victims to sue for compensation.

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Netizens unite in support of heroin trafficker's death



Akmal Shaikh

Photo provided by
Wuhan Evening News

By Li Zhixin

British Prime Minister Gordon Brown and other senior British politicians angrily condemned China for executing a British drug smuggler, saying they were "appalled and disappointed that our persistent requests for clemency have not been granted."

But Chinese and British Web users seem united in their support of the execution.

Despite frantic appeals by the British Foreign Office, Akmal Shaikh, 53, was executed at 10.30 am on Tuesday morning in Urumqi, capital of the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region.

Shaikh is believed to be the first citizen of the 17-year-old European Union to be executed in China in the last 58 years.

The government said it would resist any interference in its judicial affairs. Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Jiang Yu said the government was "strongly dissatisfied" with Britain's stance and called on the UK to retreat from its stance to avoid damaging Sino-British ties.

Xiao Huanrong, dean of international relations at the Communication University of China, said

the British government's remarks showed a double standard for legal affairs in China.

The response from the public was also overwhelming. A survey on Huanqiu.com showed among 26,000 Chinese netizens surveyed, 62 percent said the British Prime Minister was trampling on China's judicial sovereignty and 38 percent said they did so out of ignorance and habit.

In another survey of 63,292 netizens on Sohu.com, 91 percent said laws require enforcement to mean anything.

"It's human nature to plead for a criminal who is from the same country or the same family, but judicial independence should be respected and any person who sets foot on Chinese soil must respect our laws," said Li Tao, a postgraduate of Communication University of China.

Netizens pointed out the amount of heroin Shaikh carried was far greater than the minimum needed for a death sentence.

"In China, anyone who carries more than 50 grams of heroin faces execution. The amount Shaikh carried was more than 80 times that," a netizen named Huan Huan said. "Why should Chinese law be

lenient to him? Do you have any idea how many people his drugs would have reached?"

Many British netizens also expressed their support of the decision.

"If you break the law you face the consequences. We don't want him serving his sentence in the UK and then getting out to perhaps committing [sic] similar offences in future", said Rory Wiltshire Swindon in a comment on the website of the *Daily Mail*, a popular British newspaper.

Another man, Kevin Sullivan, posted at Time Online, saying: "It's a shame the UK doesn't have the same courage to deal with people like that. Why is there always uproar in the UK press when one of its citizens is caught smuggling drugs abroad? Drug smugglers are scum, they peddle death and misery without a care for the victims!"

"Were we to apply the Chinese, and, many other Far Eastern countries' version of justice, we could possibly see a reduction in a problem that poses severe problems for the west. Then again, we may not, but the problem would not get any worse, and, drug smugglers would know exactly where they stand," he said.

Art district brings season's spirit to autistics

By Zhang Dongya

Autistic children from Stars and Rain, a local educational organization that aids autistic children, received presents from Santa this Christmas.

The presents were handed out by 22 emissaries at 22 International Art Plaza, which opened in November to house art galleries, studios and cultural organizations in the central business district.

Stars and Rain, founded in 1993 by Tian Huiping, the mother of an autistic boy, is the country's first educational non-governmental organization dedicated to serving autistic children.

The group receives autistic children from all over China. It is currently aiding 60 children between the ages of 3 and 6, and another six children between the ages of 13 and 16.

"These children have a hard time connecting with the outside world and communicating with others. They need more people learn about their situation," said Wang Peipei, spokeswoman of Stars and Rain.

Stars and Rain also provides training in Applied Behavior Analysis to teachers and parents.

"The long-term goal is to take care of autistic children. They get through one stage in life, but may have problems in other stages. More teachers are needed, and parents must play a more active role," Wang said.

So far, the group has helped 6,000 autistic children and their families through parent-training courses that teach parents essential skills.

Its volunteer pool includes several overseas contributors. Alexander Haase, from Germany, and Londoner Rob Asprey filmed the documentary *Children of the Stars* in 2007 to focus on one family with an autistic child enrolled in the school.

The film aired on local TV stations and at film festivals including the International Children's Rights Film Festival, sponsored by UNICEF in December.

Cold winter awaits creatives

By He Jianwei

Eighteen artists bearing bricks stood in a line for an hour at the ruins of Zhengyang Creative Art Zone Tuesday: it was another protest against forced demolition.

To make room for urban sprawl, many of the suburban art zones have been getting demolished the last two months.

Located in Changdian Village, northeast of Chaoyang District, Zhengyang Creative Art Zone has been stripped of its water, electricity and heating since early December.

To make their plight known, Zhang Wei, a resident artist, started the *Warm Winter* performance art exhibition, bringing together 90 artists from 20 art zones to stage performance pieces about the conflict.

Since 2007, about 50 Chinese and foreign artists have signed five-

year lease agreements for a spot in the Zhengyang Creative Art Zone.

On November 26, the developer suddenly ordered all artists to "move out" before December 4 without paying any compensation.

Two days later, the demolition squad was already ripping down houses by force. Workers leveled the homes of new arrivals and property managers first.

On December 4, the property managers fled and the developers pocketed 310,000 yuan of pre-paid rent money.

"The cold weather woke me up early that morning," Zhang said. It was -9 C on December 5, and the developers had shut down the heat. Eight days later, water would follow. On December 19, there was another clash when men hired by the developers carried off all the electrical

generators rented by the artists.

Homeless artists are still living in the ruins. Zhang said 42 families — 120 people counting infants and the elderly — still live in Zhengyang Creative Art Zone.

While the artists do not question the government's decision to redevelop the site, they do complain about the development company's methods.

"They gave us five days to get out of here. It is difficult to find a new place to put my sculptures, because some of them are 6 meters tall," Yu Gao, an artist and Zhang's wife, said.

But there may be little hope, because the contract that created the art village was never legal.

Zhengyang Construction Engineering Corporation signed a contract to rent land from Changdian Village for 30 years for the purpose

of making an art zone. But the village mayor Liu Jinku admitted the contact was never real.

Relevant government laws on land leases limit the maximum duration to 20 years. But because the villagers were poor and the land was unused, they bumped it past the limit.

Eighteen artists who participated in the demonstration were from 008 Art Zone, where residents face a similar situation.

But Jiangfu Art Zone is a special case. In July, the artists there received a preliminary eviction notice.

"We banded together and appealed to the authorities again and again. A lawsuit is one option, but it takes a long time. We're afraid our houses will all be smashed before the suit ends," Zhang Xiaotao said.

Local artists stand united on the ruins of Zhengyang Creative Art Zone. Zhengyang was targeted for demolition and redevelopment in November.

Photo by Li Guiming



When will China create luxury?

By Li Zhixin

The new World Luxury Association (WLA) 2009-2010 global report shows China has overtaken the US as the second-largest market for luxury goods in the world, trailing longtime leader Japan.

Local luxury brands have responded to a flood of foreign competitors with deafening silence.

Why is the domestic luxury brand industry failing to gain the slightest foothold in its own country?



Home-grown luxury brands are rarely worn on Chinese streets.

CFP Photos

Luxury without a name

Robert Polet, CEO of Gucci Group, said last year young Chinese buyers made up a fourth of worldwide luxury sales.

According to WLA statistics, domestic customers buy 60 percent of their luxury goods while overseas. Travel is a defining factor in boosting luxury goods consumption.

"That wealthy people scramble to buy Western luxury brands has nothing to do with 'foreign worship.' It's because China doesn't have any real luxury brand that is recognized internationally," said Ouyang Kun, WLA representative to China.

Liu Jingjing, 28, editor of

a women's fashion magazine, spent 6,900 yuan on a Jaeger LeCoultre watch instead of buying Fiyda, her parents' preferred domestic brand.

"Fiyda has several fashionable patterns in the same price range and with superior quality. I insisted on buying this low-end Swiss product because Jaeger LeCoultre has a bigger name," she said.

One popular belief is that the more expensive a product, the more luxurious it is.

But China is hardly short on expensive brands: liquor labels like Maotai, Wuliangye and Shuijingfang; fashion labels like Septwolves, Baoxiniao, Bosideng

and Yongzheng; and jewelry labels like Dongfangyinyu and Nobel Jewelry are extraordinarily priced.

"You will never see Prince Charles smoking Chunghwa or drinking Shuijingfang, even though these products are in top quality," Ouyang said.

Luxury brands are defined by three qualities: historical recognition, mature consumption and worldwide demand. But not one domestic brand has achieved all three, said Yu Mingyang, director of the Brand Management Research Center at Shanghai's Jiaotong University.

He calls pricey domestic products "quasi-luxuries."



The domestic market for luxury goods is stronger than ever.

More time needed

The WLA anticipates more domestic luxury brands in the next five to 10 years given the growing market. But finding a position will be hard, since European and American brands have already divided and conquered the market.

The past decade gave rise to 18,000 billionaires, 44,000 millionaires and 250 million middle-class families who can afford to splurge. At least 195 million people in China can afford luxury goods, and they are consuming in core markets like Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou and Hangzhou.

French luxury brand Louis Vuitton entered China in 1992, and its sales volume has grown 50 percent annually. The sales volume of German luxury brands increased 40 percent compared with a 9 percent growth in the German market.

They are not alone. Gucci opened 29 shops in China and eight in Beijing alone. Versace announced it will double its number of boutiques this year. American luxury brand Coach is planning 55 new stores in the next five years.

"More and more international luxury brands targeting the Chinese market choose Beijing or Shang-

hai as a starting point. Domestic brands are not aggressive enough, and domestic consumers eye them with a curious wait-and-see attitude," Yu said.

"What China's luxury brand lack is not culture or quality — they lack the brand itself. It takes money and effort to build a luxury brand: two things Chinese businessmen are notoriously unwilling to invest. All they want is short-term profits as soon as possible," he said.

The shortage of brand specialists only complicates matters. "Anyone competent at brand building will go work for a foreign luxury brand instead," he said.

"Due to the poor operations, Chinese consumers look at domestic 'luxury' labels the way they look at quality teas, porcelain and wood furniture: as collectables," he said.

While the ability of Chinese brands to penetrate foreign markets is promising, the home market will continue to be dominated by foreign brands through at least 2030, he said.

It may be true that time heals all: with many domestic brands only 20 years old, it will be a while before Chinese makers have the age and clout needed to impress their own countrymen.

Space on world stage limited

Only in the last 30 years have Chinese brands realized the importance of image.

Two domestic clothing brands — NE•TIGER and Shanghai Tang — are fast approaching world luxury status, Ouyang said. They reflect two opposing tracks of development: one built itself working with domestic entrepreneurs and the other through international cooperation.

NE•TIGER was established in 1992 by Zhang Zhifeng, 46, praised fashion gurus as the first Chinese person to found a luxury brand.

Zhang was brought into the clothing industry by his mother, a tailor. In the late 1980s, he started his business manufacturing for other brands, a channel that still accounts for 70 percent of NE•TIGER's sales volume.

"I was stunned by those department stores when I first visited New York in 1988. My

companies products were being sold at five times their price in the US, and eight times in Europe. I didn't understand why at first, and felt like I was being cheated," he said.

Zhang's view of business broadened as he sold to people all over the world. "It's not enough to succeed as an OEM or on the domestic market. We have to learn how to build our own brands to ensure the long-term development and maturation of our companies," he said.

NE•TIGER is aimed at three consumers: mature consumers who grew up with the brand, foreign consumers who have embraced it and elite women who appreciate its aesthetics.

The brand has sold well worldwide and become a leader in the fur and leather industry with its move into the international market this year. NE•TIGER now has design and management centers in Paris, Milan, New York,

London, Moscow, Hong Kong and Beijing.

Another fast-growing domestic luxury brand, Shanghai Tang, was praised as China's Chanel by *Business Week*.

It was founded in 1994 by David Tang Wing-Cheung, a maker of old-fashioned Shanghai-style *qipao*. The success of Shanghai Tang can be attributed to its purchase by Swiss luxury company Richemont in 2000, which quickly brought the brand to world attention.

After the purchase, its previous market position changed from pure Chinese style to Chinese and Western styles combined. Its sales volume grew 50 percent in the US and 43 percent globally in 2008.

"With the support of Richemont's mature management system and precise brand-promotion strategy, the brand has developed fast," said Ling Jiacheng, the CEO of Shanghai Tang in Shanghai region.

Changing views on race

Country faces culture clash as foreign residents increase

With trade and commerce drawing ever larger numbers of foreigners to Chinese cities, tensions have become more common in a country of limited racial diversity.

How does increased immigration alter Chinese perceptions of race? How has the society historically dealt with ethnic differences?

Increasing tension

This summer, African immigrants, mostly the traders and merchants who make up a growing enclave in Guangzhou, Guangdong Province, protested over a black man's accidental death. Hundreds gathered at a police station, drawing attention to the plight of Africans in China.

Meanwhile, in a well-publicized moment, a 20-year-old Shanghaiese contestant to an *American-Idol*-like show named Lou Jing started a national debate about what it means to be Chinese. Lou, the daughter of a Chinese woman and a black American whom she has not met, considers herself completely Chinese.

Culture clash with workers

The Africans' protests aside, foreigners working on the mainland also feel the tensions that expose differences in work experience, pay levels and communication.

In the last few years, a growing number of Americans in their 20s and 30s have been heading to China for employment.

"The tight collaboration of the two countries in business and sci-

ence makes the Chinese-American pairing one of the most common in the workplace in China," said Vas Taras, a management professor at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, a specialist in cross-cultural work group management.

But the two groups were raised differently.

The Americans have had more exposure to free-market principles. "Young Americans were brought up in a commercial environment," said Zhao Neng, 28, a senior associate at Blue Oak Capital, a private equity firm based in Beijing. "We weren't. So the workplace provides a unique learning process for my generation."

Sean Leow, 28, founder of Neocha, a social networking site based in Shanghai, says young Chinese employees often enter jobs with less hands-on preparation. They may also have less understanding about client services, he said.

In addition, he said, "I know a lot of my Chinese colleagues did not do internships in college," in contrast to US students.



Lou Jing, center, a contestant in a talent show this summer sparked an intense debate about what it means to be Chinese because of her mixed-race parentage.

Getty Image

Expert Inclusion and rapid change

These kinds of encounters with foreigners are not new. This is especially true for Chinese people who live in the coastal region. What distinguishes today's experience is the unprecedented scale and diverse number of countries and regions involved.

The language barrier is a huge obstacle for understanding between Chinese people

and foreign migrants, but that can change.

In today's world, this encounter is a two-way street, with many Chinese migrating to other countries and citizens of other countries moving to China for economic or educational opportunities.

Race matters in China, as it does in the US, with foreigners

and immigrants of darker skin often the targets of discrimination. This is true despite the warm relationship between China and African countries during the Mao Zedong era.

—Zai Liang, professor of sociology and director of the Urban China Research Network at the University at Albany, New York
(The New York Times)

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A roadworthy way-out

Geely-Volvo deal marks nation's first overseas M&As

By Huang Daohen

To buy or not to buy, that is the question.

Overseas mergers and acquisitions (MA) can make a "nobody" private company known, but they bring grave risks. Caution has become the whispered buzz word of Chinese businessmen.

But Geely chairman Li Shufu was rebellious. Li confirmed last week that his company has reached a framework agreement with Ford Group to buy Volvo.

Is it a deal more roadworthy than it might appear? While China has overtaken the US as the world's biggest auto market, he hopes to "sell cars made in China to the whole world, instead of letting foreign cars enter."

Geely to buy Volvo

The high-profile "Volvo sale" is finalized. Zhejiang Geely Group, the country's largest automaker based on last year's sales volume, announced on December 25 that it has reached a framework agreement with Ford Group to buy its luxury Swedish brand, Volvo Cars.

If everything goes smoothly, a definitive agreement will be signed in the first quarter of this year, the companies said. Government approval is expected by the second quarter.

Geely refused to say what it paid. But an unnamed source cited by *Shanghai Security News* said the company offered about \$2 billion (13.7 billion yuan) for Volvo, a third of what Ford paid for it in 1999.

Ford began trying to unload Volvo last year after the Swedish automaker's sales plummeted with the global market. In 2008, Volvo posted a loss of \$1.5 billion.

But 12-year-old Geely is growing fast thanks to a domestic boom. On October 28, the company became Ford's preferred bidder for Volvo.

Geely said it will open a Volvo factory in Beijing, choosing it over previously rumored sites Dongguan, Guangdong Province and Tianjin. The Beijing municipal government will also invest in the new plant, Xinhua reported.

The factory will be at E-Town Industry Park in the southeast.

Referring to the future of Volvo, Geely said "Volvo will retain its leadership in safety and environmental technologies, and will be positioned as a world-leading premium brand to exploit opportunities in the fast-growing Chinese market."

A roadworthy deal?

The Hong Kong-listed Geely jumped 7.3 percent to HK \$3.98 (3.5 yuan) per share last Friday after the announcement of the Volvo buy, while Ford rose 1.8 percent to \$10.08.

But the deal may be better than stock prices can reflect.

The purchase gives Geely a good platform and an established brand with which to boost its over-

seas image, said Wen Yijun, a veteran auto market analyst with Oriental Securities in Beijing.

Wen said Volvo is still favored by consumers around the world for its safety rating. The automaker itself also acknowledged this in its advertising. "By 2020, no one should be killed or injured in a Volvo."

By contrast, Geely is criticized for its poor safety record. The company had to postpone a North American launch when it embarrassingly failed to pass US safety and emission tests.

Geely has long wanted insight into Western vehicle development, and buying a mainstream foreign brand is a good way to get it, Wen said. "Volvo has invisible assets. The information it comes with may help Geely break through into foreign markets."

Geely would also have lower-cost access to the licensing of foreign-designed parts.

Different strategy for China

Analysts have beaten to death the question of whether Chinese companies should seize on the downturn to buy ailing overseas brands.

The pros and cons are obvious: overseas MA can bring benefits, but it also brings high risks.

The benefit is that after acquisition, Chinese companies can quickly gain brand names, technology and competitiveness, said Zhao Xiao, economics professor with University of Science and Technology Beijing.

But wide differences in culture and law, as well as a lack of executives with multi-cultural knowledge and managing employees, most MA kills.

Auto manufacturing is a different industry.

"It takes decades to develop global competitiveness and make one's own brand, like most Japanese and South Korean automakers have done," Zhao said.

"Times have changed. As China is already decades behind, it cannot wait even one more year to get one of its brands overseas," he said.

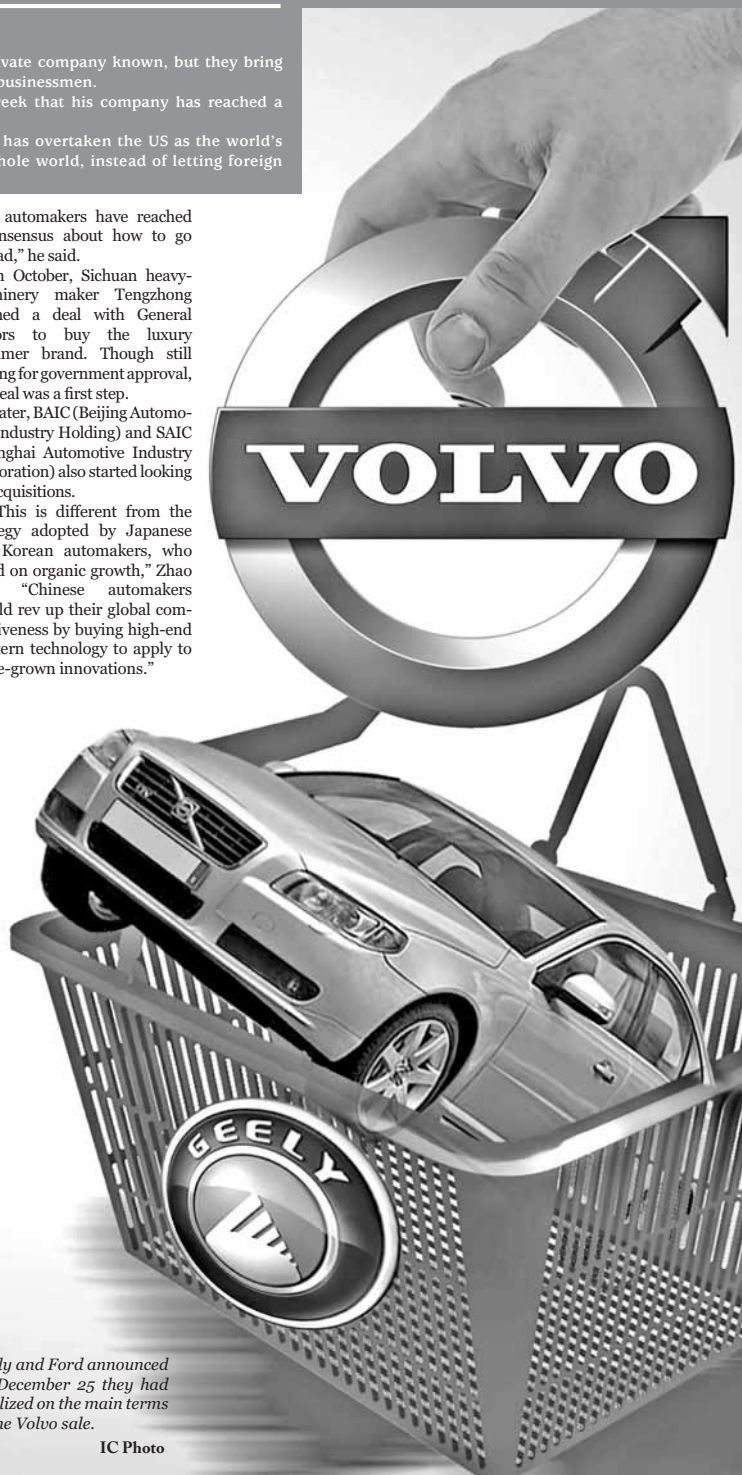
"Geely's deal may show Chi-

nese automakers have reached a consensus about how to go abroad," he said.

In October, Sichuan heavy-machinery maker Tengzhong reached a deal with General Motors to buy the luxury Hummer brand. Though still waiting for government approval, the deal was a first step.

Later, BAIC (Beijing Automotive Industry Holding) and SAIC (Shanghai Automotive Industry Corporation) also started looking for acquisitions.

"This is different from the strategy adopted by Japanese and Korean automakers, who relied on organic growth," Zhao said. "Chinese automakers should rev up their global competitiveness by buying high-end Western technology to apply to home-grown innovations."



Geely and Ford announced on December 25 they had finalized on the main terms of the Volvo sale.

IC Photo

Background

The top auto market

China buys more cars and trucks than the US. Official statistics show that 13 million cars and trucks were sold in China in 2009, up 40 percent from 2008.

Though auto sales in cities like Beijing and Shanghai

remained level, an explosion in second- and third-tier city has made the country the world's largest auto market, the Associated Press reported.

The report cited a minivan salesman, Zhu Yi, in Chengdu,

Sichuan Province, as saying that "auto sales in the rural areas are exploding."

Buyers in Chengdu are often put on a waiting list for weeks before being able to purchase a popular model. "We simply don't

have enough of the cars people want. Sales could be climbing even faster," Zhu said.

Tax cuts, government subsidies and growing consumer spending power have bolstered auto sales in the hinterland. More

and more people are eager to buy their first car.

But some doubt the good times will last. But with only 40 out of every 1,000 people owning a car, the industry's strong growth may last decades.

Naked marriage

Getting married without a house, car, ceremony, banquet or ring



Will you marry me if I do not have a car or house? Weddings despite the lack of a house, car or diamond ring has become popular among the younger generation. CFP Photo

By Zhang Dongya

The 1980's generation has reached marriageable age, but many in the group are shrugging off nuptial traditions because of their huge price tag. More and more young people choose to get a marriage license without the "prerequisite" house, car, wedding ceremony, banquet or ring, a recent phenomenon the Chinese people call "naked marriage."

Last week, seven couples in Shandong Province participated in a registration-only wedding ceremony. The event drew attention to the younger generation's marriage problems and how the solutions challenge traditional notions about marriage.

Though domestic media dubbed naked marriage as "trendy," the couples involved see it more as a last resort.

Without flowers or wedding dress, a ceremony or a banquet, seven young lovers in Jinan, Shandong, registered their marriage last Sunday and announced to all that they were "married," the *Jinan Times* reported. Afterwards, they gathered in the city's Quancheng Park to congratulate each other.

One of the couples was Li Zhiyuan and Xiaoli, migrants who moved to Jinan after college. Both came from poor families they still support, so buying an expensive apartment before getting married was out of the question.

There are many like Li and his wife – part of the 80's generation – who cannot afford a home, so they arrange group naked marriages online and spend 9 yuan to buy a marriage license.

Li said their parents understood their situation and agreed to their wedding plans. There are couples who face opposition from parents but nevertheless go through with

their decision.

In a survey on naked marriage on Sohu.com last week, 43 percent of respondents said they would choose a registration-only marriage, while 47 said "no." Forty-four percent said happiness was attainable despite a naked marriage, while 44 percent disagreed. Among male respondents, 80 percent supported naked marriage; 70 percent of females thought it was not sufficient.

A popular new TV series, *Humble Dwelling*, reflects many realities in contemporary society, including naked marriage. The show's newlywed couple, Guo Haiping and Su Chou, applied for a marriage certificate without a house, car, wedding ceremony or ring.

Many criticized the new phenomenon, calling it "love and marriage without a firm material base." Others frowned on it because they say marriage is extremely sacred – an event that should not be rushed.

Comment

A return and a progress

Regarding "naked marriage," most people in their 50s and 60s got married this way because they were poor. It did not negatively influence their life. The younger generation is facing greater pressure and will feel more burdened if they are required to produce things beyond their means, such as an expensive house. In this era, choosing this kind of marriage is also progress.

It becomes much easier: there is no need to balance booking a hotel and banquet on an auspicious date, which is mentally and financially exhausting. Parents may be concerned about social connections and local customs, but the young generation has chosen to confine marriage to its intimacy between two persons.

– Feng Xiaodong, independent critic on finance and real estate

Not necessary to go to an extreme

"Naked marriage" advocates industry and thrift, but it goes too far. It's just like a city that wants

to help build a conservation-oriented society; but it's not necessary to turn off all the lamps and street lights to save electricity. If luxurious and show-off weddings are an extreme, naked marriage is another extreme.

A wedding might only happen once in a person's life. Some people, especially women, consider it the happiest moment of their life. Those who have a tight budget and cannot afford a house or car can at least have their wedding photos taken and hold a simple but joyful banquet. It is not necessary to hold a naked marriage if it is strongly opposed by parents.

– Cheng Shaode, observer in Liaoning

Break through traditional rituals

The marriage ritual in modern China consists of wedding photos, a big banquet and travel for the honeymoon. We're told to follow each of these and unconsciously compare ourselves to others. If we consider marriage so sacred, then this ritual cheapens it through imitation.

I think the most important

thing is to make your own decision. Whether you choose to marry a guy with the entire ritual, or just get a marriage certificate, it should be something you desire. Life is so short; we should learn to enjoy life and not bother or be limited by over-elaborate formalities.

– Zhao Hongyan, clerk

Change old concept on house

Chinese people consider a house the most important property. Living your whole life in a rented house is unacceptable. In the past, the government provided houses for people, but now, young people have to buy it with their meager salaries. The biggest reason people do not approve of "naked marriage" is the lack of a house. I know a newly-married couple who signed a contract with the lessor for 20 years after discussions with their parents – something rare in the country. But actually, renting a house for 20 years is economic and less burdensome than becoming a slave to your mortgage.

– Lufai, netizen on sohu.com

Background

The term naked marriage emerged in late-2008, during the global financial crisis. It refers to weddings among the young that involve only a wedding certificate.

In the 1970s and 80s, the "Three Big Articles" were required before a wedding: a bicycle, wristwatch and sewing machine. Fast-forward two decades: people, particularly women, now demand a house and

car as conditions for marriage.

People who choose naked marriages are usually 20 to 35-year-olds who are well educated and have good salaries. They are those who have decided to abandon the traditional wedding ceremony and instead adopted a simpler way to get married. But many go down this road because they cannot afford to keep up tradition.

Exaggerated housing prices, especially in large cities like Beijing and Shanghai, make young people shrink back from tradition. Most young people rely on their parents – even grandparents – to get an apartment. Those from impoverished families have no alternative but strive to improve their lot in life; in the mean time, a wedding means naked marriage.

More expats eager for hard-to-obtain China green card

By Han Manman

It's a no-brainer that Chinese nationals have a hard time getting a US green card. What about expats wanting one in China?

The creation of a Chinese permanent residency, or green card, in 2004 was a milestone in the country's immigration law. Five years on, the card has become an increasingly sought-after document to the expats pouring into China. But many complain that obtaining that status in China is very difficult, and the qualifications are tough.

Colombian's green card dream

Colombia native Leonardo Posada, 50, who is married to a Chinese woman with whom he has a 9-year-old daughter, received his long-awaited Chinese green card in October 2008.

The Beijing businessman first came to China as a child and has been living here for the last three decades. Because his family and his work are here, he considers permanent residence crucial.

Posada first applied for permanent residence in 2004 but did not have time to go through the battery of interviews, so he gave it up. In early 2008, he reapplied.

He did not find the process difficult since he was "really qualified on everything the Chinese policy required," Posada said. "It only took me around half a year to get the green card from the time I applied."

"Getting this identity is meaningful for me. It shows I'm being recognized by the country," he said. "I've lived

in Beijing for 28 years, my wife is Chinese, many of my friends are Chinese, I have my life here. With the card, I feel I'm more Chinese and I feel more secure."

The card has also brought him added convenience in daily living: he is allowed to live in China indefinitely and can enter and depart the country without visa hassles.

But one thing he hopes the Chinese green card would cover is dual citizenship for the children of holders.

"My daughter has Chinese nationality. I hoped she could be both Chinese and Colombian. Many expats who hold a green card have similar problems," he said.

Green cards popular

Beijing has seen a rapid increase in green card applications in the last two years, especially in 2009, when applications increased 26 percent from 2008, said Su Qiang, an officer at the Exit and Entry Administration of the Beijing Municipal Public



Many expats complain that obtaining permanent residence in China is very hard.

CFP Photo

Security Bureau (PSB).

By the end of 2009, 348 applications had been approved since the immigration law was passed in 2004. The top three applicants by country were the US, Japan and Canada, Su said.

In 2009 alone, 55 of 106 Beijing applicants were granted the card, including Kim Chang-back, former coach of the national women's hockey team. The South Korean, who has lived in China for more than 9 years and contributed to the sport's development domestically, received permanent residence in November. Of the 55 green-card holders, nearly half are wives or hus-

bands of Chinese citizens.

"Convenience is the biggest draw of permanent resident status, but for some, it is a matter of pride," Su said. "After all, not every foreigner living here has a green card, and holders may feel they are accepted and trusted by the Chinese government."

Su said the status allows foreigners to stay in China without a work contract or visa, but it is not equivalent to citizenship. The holders are not allowed to vote in elections, hold political office or serve in the military.

High threshold keeps away expats

Though applications have increased, many complain that obtaining a green card is extremely difficult. Italian businessman Filippo Pacini is one of them.

Pacini came to China with his wife and two children eight years ago. After seeing first-hand the country's increasingly open and lucrative investment atmosphere,



The Posada family.

Photo provided by Leonardo Posada



Police said providing increased preferential policies to green-card holders has become a big trend.

CFP Photo

he decided to stay in Beijing long-term. But getting a green card has become an impossible task.

"I don't even try to apply as the rules are so strict for regular expats," he said.

Pacini said the only way for him to get a green card is to make an investment of \$500,000 (3.4 million yuan) – money he does not have.

To qualify for a green card, applicants must be leading business professionals or experts in a certain field who have made "outstanding contributions, or are of special importance to China," the green card application guidelines say.

Those who come to China to be reunited with a Chinese wife or husband, and those who invest

at least \$500,000 in the country are also eligible.

Posada acknowledges the complicated procedures and strict requirements, but understands the reason behind them.

"It's not as easy to get as a pizza, but I think China is improving," he said. "China is not an immigrant country after all... each country needs to protect itself."

Su said there is no green-card quota for Beijing; anyone who is qualified can apply. The municipal government is also actively exploring ways to ease the application process and has worked out preferential policies for expat residents.

He said the Beijing PSB has communicated to the central government existing problems and expats' suggestions, such as the card's lack of recognition in small cities and limited benefits for holders.

From regulated life to green card

Before the green-card system was adopted on August 15, 2004, a limited number of foreign nationals were awarded resettlement or permanent residence certificates, a plan introduced in the 1980s.

The granting of green cards was taken by Westerners as a sign that China was opening its door to outsiders, trying to attract more foreign talents.

Before the mid-1980s, lives of Beijing expats were strictly regulated. Posts were set up on major streets to supervise their activities. Billboards reading "Expats are forbidden to pass without permission" could be seen in many places.

After 1985, the Beijing government revoked the prohibition on expats in certain areas downtown. In 2003, it removed restrictions on expats' housing. In September 2004, 28 expats became the first group to receive the Chinese green card.

Now, Beijing is home to 100,000 expats who have been in the city for at least a year and who hold a proper job.

The PSB's Exit and Entry Administration handles green-card applications and verifies supporting documents, which are then forwarded to the Municipal Public Security Bureau and the Ministry of Public Security for approval.

"We suggest that expats call the exit and entry administration first to be clear what materials they need to prepare, instead of directly applying for a green card to avoid unnecessary trouble," Su said.

"Providing increased preferential policies to green-card holders has become a big trend," Su said, adding that authorities are also considering making the card easily available by broadening the range of potential applicants without lowering the requirements.

Canada opens doors to Chinese tour groups

By Zhao Hongyi

China granted Canada "approved travel destination" status last Thursday, the same day Canada authorized a number of Chinese travel agencies to organize group tours to the country.

The travel agencies, based mostly in Beijing, Shanghai and Guangzhou, were assured by the Canadian Embassy of shorter waiting times on visa applications and increased visa approvals, embassy officials said.

Visa processing is expected to be slashed from two to three weeks to less than a week, and the number of visas granted is expected to increase from 50 to 60 percent to more than 90 percent, according to China Inter-

national Travel Services (CITS), one of the Canadian-authorized tour operators.

"We expect a boom in tourists bound for Canada in 2010," Cai Youqiang, an employee at CITS said.

During a visit to Beijing December 3, Canadian Premier Stephen Harper promised to facilitate Chinese tourists' travel to Canada as he awaited approved destination status for his country.

"As Canada prepares to welcome the world to Vancouver for the 2010 Winter Olympic and Paralympic Games, this new designation will help more of our Chinese friends discover why Canada is one of the best places in the world in which to invest,

innovate, work and compete," Harper said after a meeting with Premier Wen Jiabao.

"Obtaining permission to arrange group travel to Canada becomes easier," a statement on Harper's website said after last week's development. "As a result, this should encourage more people from China to travel to Canada, which will have a positive impact on the Canadian economy."

Aside from businesspeople, Cai expects more travelers to go for conferences and holiday. "Canada's tourist destinations are well developed and the country has long been a hot destination for Chinese business travelers," he said. "We are ready to sell travel packages

right away and don't need any time to prepare."

In 2008, 159,000 Chinese nationals visited Canada, up 5.3 percent from the previous year, according to data from the Canadian Embassy.

The Canadian Tourism Commission said Chinese visitors had the highest average length of stay: 28 nights. They also spent on average more than visitors from other countries: \$1,648.51 (11,250 yuan).

Meanwhile, the Conference Board of Canada estimated in a recent survey that the country's "approved destination" status is expected to boost tourism from China by as much as 50 percent by 2015.

Cuban scholar appeals for end to US cultural embargo

By Zhang Dongya

A visiting Cuban researcher and educator reiterated an appeal to end the four-decade-old US embargo on Cuba, particularly the ban on artistic and academic exchanges between the two nations.

In September, Barack Obama's administration adopted several new measures on Cuba, including elimination of restrictions on family visits for Cuban residents in the US and the elimination of restrictions on their remittances to relatives in Cuba.

"Obama has promised a broad range of measures, but so far they are only confined to Cubans living in the US, and nothing has benefited the country and the Cuban people," Carlos Alzugaray Treto, said during a speech on Cuban foreign policy at its embassy Wednesday.

"There is no essential change in the new government's policy," he said. "We can see some positive actions, such as loosening visa restrictions to artists and academics, but we expected more radical change," said the faculty member of the University of Havana, the country's oldest university.

Trento, 66, a regular lecturer on US-Cuba international affairs, foreign relations and European political developments, was denied a visa to enter the US in 2003 to speak at the Latin American Studies Association's International Congress. The US routinely denies visas to Cuban academics and artists as part of an effort to topple its government through isolation.

In 2004, the George W. Bush administration further tightened the embargo on Cuba, causing the few remaining cultural exchanges between the two countries to cease completely.

Trento emphasized that the core of Cuba's political policy is anti-hegemony, or anti-dependency. "It is based on three factors: Cuba's geography, the weakness of Cuba's economy and history," he said.

Meanwhile, Carlos Varela, one of Cuba's best-known musicians is also helping reshape relations between the US and his native land. He went to Washington in December to meet with US officials before going to Hollywood to work on an album, the *New York Times* reported. In 2004, Varela too was denied a visa to enter the US.

"We have to be patient and optimistic," Treto said, referring to US foreign policy.

Police caution against fireworks during Spring Festival

By Zhao Hongyi

As Spring Festival approaches, police are warning foreigners that firecrackers and fireworks displays are forbidden in residential areas and offices.

This week, officers from the municipal immigration office visited universities with huge foreign student populations to explain the need to be vigilant of fire hazards in a city as populous as Beijing. The capital's population is estimated at million.

During Spring Festival, some fireworks displays will be allowed in certain areas within Fifth Ring Road, the police said, adding that they will release the list of "designated" locations before the holiday. The new lunar year begins February 14.

On the eve of Spring Festival, employees at China Central Television (CCTV) set the new CCTV compound with a huge fireworks display. The blaze engulfed the yet-to-be-opened Mandarin Oriental Hotel and burned parts of the



new CCTV building, bannared as a national landmark.

Damages amounted to hundreds of millions of yuan. The suspects were arrested

and the case is still under investigation.

Dozens of others were injured playing with firecrackers during the holiday period,

an issue that has long been a topic of debate among Beijingers and a headache for authorities.

Photo provided by Lin Song

Pakistan will remain tough on terrorists

By Zhang Dongya

Pakistan's ambassador on Tuesday said the country will continue to implement tough counterterrorism measures this year to combat Islamist radicals.

"We will continue counterterrorism efforts in 2010 with strong determination. We will conduct operations on our side of the border," Ambassador Masood Khan said at a media briefing, referring to the troubled Pakistan-Afghanistan border that harbors Taliban and al-Qaida militants.

Pakistan in 2009 fought a fierce war against terrorism, Khan said. "We have given tremen-

dous sacrifices to oppose the menace ... Our military operations in Bajaur, Malakand and South Waziristan have been successful. The backbone of terrorists has been broken," he said.

The war however has displaced 2.5 million Pakistanis. Khan said rehabilitation and reconstruction in some areas have begun.

The government of President Asif Ali Zardari, husband of slain former premier Benazir Bhutto, faces more challenges this year, particularly the threat from Islamist extremists al-Qaida and the Taliban.

Khan's speech came a day after a suicide bomber attacked

a religious procession of Shiite Muslims in the southern city of Karachi Monday, killing at least 30 people. It followed two bomb blasts in the city last Saturday and Sunday, which killed dozens and injured at least a hundred.

Khan said the outcome of Pakistan's anti-terrorism campaign is tied to the success of Afghanistan's strategy. "If terrorism emanating from Afghanistan is effectively stemmed, acts of terrorism in Pakistan will spiral down."

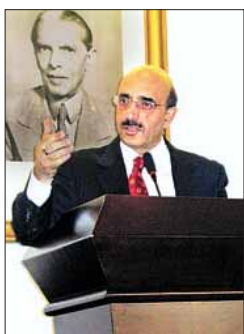
He said there must be a political strategy for a durable solution to Afghanistan's militancy problem, since a purely military strategy is

not likely to succeed.

Besides counterterrorism, economic development is also high on Pakistan's agenda for 2010, the ambassador said, adding that the South Asian nation expects higher-level economic relations with China.

In 2009, bilateral trade between the two countries reached 47.7 billion yuan. This is expected to increase this year as the number of trade missions grow.

Khan also stressed the nations' closer partnership in the areas of energy, construction, mining, IT, telecommunications, agriculture and education.



Masood Khan Photo by Wendy

American flag football group seeks players



Beijing flag football players meet every Saturday afternoon in Chaoyang Park. Photo provided by Yoyao Hsueh

By Annie Wei

The cold did not deter some people from playing ball in Chaoyang Park last Saturday afternoon. Among them were members of Beijing Flag Football, the city's lone American flag football group.

The sport, similar to American football, is popular in its native US but is little-known in China. Three American guys introduced it to Beijing in August: Yoyao Hsueh, 29, a peer counselor; Cliff Torrijos, 31, a personal trainer; and Josh Suarez, 26, an English

teacher. They met online as they were scouring the internet for local flag football teams. There were none, so they decided to start one.

"The first time we played, we had five people. In about 3 weeks, we had probably 15 and it's just grown exponentially despite the cold weather," Hsueh said. Sixty people have signed up, most of whom are 20- to 30-year-old foreigners.

The group only manages to gather 15 to 20 people to its weekly games, including a

couple of avid Chinese players. When the temperature plummeted last week, only eight players showed up. But no matter the weather, as long as they have eight confirmations, the minimum to play the game, they will be out on the field, Hsueh said.

He said the group is planning its first spring league in Beijing and is looking for skilled players. "This makes games competitive, but not overly competitive to the point where it is no longer fun."

"We want to create a social

and fun league. We want it to work as a multicultural platform and have Chinese players join in and spread the sport," he said.

The group plays every Saturday afternoon at Chaoyang Park. Participants only need to pay 5 yuan for the park entrance. Hsueh and his fellow organizers are scouting for a better venue.

The group already has a sponsor but welcomes more partnerships. For more information, visit beijingflagfootball.com.

Salon teaches calligraphy to younger generation, expats

By Zhao Hongyi

Two new graduates are running a business to prevent calligraphy from becoming a dead art.

In September, friends Wen Hui and Lei Lei formed Calligraphy Salon, to spread traditional culture to foreigners and the younger Chinese generation.

"We initially invited friends interested in traditional culture, so we could appreciate it together and discuss it," Wen said.

Later, members found themselves focusing more and more on calligraphy, so their meetings became a venue to share knowledge on the art and help each other improve their writing skills.

Members meet every Saturday, from 3 to 5 pm, in a courtyard restaurant. "We invite various calligraphers to give lectures about the

peculiarities of certain Chinese characters," Wen said. Guests also discuss the different aspects of calligraphy, its general styles and the skills involved in mastering it.

"We welcome expats to participate and exchange ideas with native masters and our colleagues," Wen said, adding that the salon has become a place where "various new ideas about Chinese characters and calligraphy are emerging."

Each session costs 45 yuan and includes the "four treasures of the study": brush, ink, paper and inkstone. The organizers also provide English interpretation to foreign participants.

By establishing Calligraphy Salon, Wen and Lei inadvertently responded to the government's call for new graduates to go into business



People interested in calligraphy gather at Yizhan restaurant and bar. Photo provided by Daisy Wenhui

to ease the pressure on the job market, which has become increasingly overcrowded in the past decade.

"Fortunately, we found the courtyard owned by a friend as the permanent venue for our activities," Wen said.

Calligraphy Salon

Where: Yizhan Restaurant and Bar, 30 Beixinqiao Toutiao, Gujia, Dongcheng District

Email: daisy.wenhui@gmail.com
Cost: 45 yuan per session

Event

International Festival Children's Choir recruiting new members

The three-year-old International Festival Children's Choir (IFCC) is seeking new members: boys and girls between ages 7 and 12. The choir, under the artistic direction of Hannah Quinn, meets from September to December and January to May, with a concert at the end of each term. Auditions are held at the start of each term and the next round of auditions will be held every Saturday this month. Three rehearsals will be held at 10 am each day at Harrow International School.

Where: Harrow International School, Olympic Area 5 (Upper School), Block 4, Anzhen Xi Li, Chaoyang District

When: Every Saturday of January, 10 am – noon

Cost: 1,500 yuan per child per term (family discounts given)

Email: childrenschoir@beijingifcc.org

Visual Stimulants – Talk by Singaporean Photographer Stefan Chow

An accomplished mountain climber, Stefan Chow has submitted Mount Everest and become one of the few professional photographers to conquer the mountain. Having traveled to more than 30 countries, he lives out the Chinese saying, "Walking 10,000 miles is superior to reading 10,000 books."

As a photographer, Chow provides an in-depth look into the lives of his subjects, their history and their environment. In this talk, he will discuss the works that excite him and help participants find their "voice." For more information about Chow, visit his website stefenchow.com.

When: January 2, 2-4 pm

Where: Room 604, Building 14, Jianwai SOHO West Zone, 39 Dongsanhuan Zhong Lu, Chaoyang District

Symphonia Vienna at the Forbidden City

The symphony, composed of musicians from all over the world, is as comfortable performing the most intimate chamber music as large symphonic orchestral repertoire. It aims to keep alive classical music through members who want to share with the public their passion and joy for it.

Where: Forbidden City Concert Hall (inside Zhongshan Park), Xicheng District

When: January 3, 7:30-9 pm

Tel: 6417 7845

(By Wei Ying)

Park's lakes open to ice skaters this week



Skating is the best sport in winter for the young and the old.

CFP Photo

By Zhao Hongyi

As the climate in Beijing freezes, a number of parks are preparing to open their ice-covered lakes for the public to skate. Zizhuyuan Park on west Third Ring Road has already opened the south and north corners of its lake for ice entertainment Monday this week, with hundreds of ice carts and skating boots prepared for leasing. It promised to open the whole ice surface of its lake later this week, depending on the thickness of ice.

"We have opened our skating business for testing last week and the ice in our lake has reached

25 centimeters," Gu Chunming, manager for the skating business of the park, said. "Very safe!"

The municipality has a very strict requirement on the thickness of ice for skating, 15 centimeters at least.

The park has invested 500,000 yuan this year. It bought 60,000 meters rails and 600 billboards reminding tourists of safety.

Other ice entertainment programs include skating, ice ball, ice bicycling, ice boating and air boards.

The Olympic Center has a 23,000 square meter ice skating rink in its man-made lake. The

center has decorated its gates in the east and north with hundreds of commercial ads.

A number of the other parks, such as Taoranting in the south, are applying for the measuring of their lake's ice and approval for opening.

The ice in Yuyuantan Park, also on West Third Ring Road, has reached 10 centimeters and is expected to open. Beihai Park, traditionally the ice entertainment place for the royal family, opened for skating this Wednesday. Shichahai Park neighboring the Forbidden City has also opened its skating entertainment on December 29.

Beihai Park

Address: 1 Wenjin Lu, Xicheng District
Tel: 6404 0610
Price: Monday – Friday, 10 yuan; weekends, 15 yuan

Olympic Village

Address: 1 Anding Lu, Chaoyang District
Tel: 6491 2233, 6491 2143
Price: Monday – Friday, 10 yuan; weekends, 20 yuan

Shichahai Park

Address: Xijiekou, Xicheng District
Tel: 6612 5717, 6612 7652
Price: Monday – Friday, 10 yuan; weekends, 15 yuan

Taoranting Park

Address: 1 Taoranting Lu, Xuanwu District
Tel: 6351 1596, 6353 2385
Price: 10 yuan

Yuyuantan Park

Address: 108 Xingshi Lu, Haidian District
Tel: 8865 3800
Price: 10 yuan

Zizhuyuan Park

Address: Nandajie, Zhongguancun, Haidian District
Tel: 8841 2830, 8841 2805
Price: 10 yuan

ASK Beijing Today

Email your questions to: weiying@ynet.com

I'm planning a trip to Harbin this month. What kind of outfit should I prepare? I heard it's very cold there. We're also thinking of visiting Changbai Mountain, but not sure if this is the best season for it.

It's freezing in Harbin right now. You need to prepare enough warm clothing. Try professional mountain-climbing brands like Columbia and The North Face. Their clothes are light but effective for very cold weather.

Most scenic parts of Changbai Mountain are closed to tourists in winter. If you have close friends there, they might be able to take you to certain areas.

Are there any wine sellers that do home delivery?

You can find a wide variety of wines on torreschina.com, a distributor that also does home deliveries.

Where do locals sell their used cars? I want to get an inexpensive, second-hand car, preferably a Chinese brand.

Below are the city's four major used-car dealers:

1. Asian Games Village Car-trading Market

Where: 25 Andinglu, Anwai Dajie, Chaoyang District
Tel: 6443 5320

2. Beifang Car-trading Market

Where: 81 Fengguan Lu, Fengtai District
Tel: 6382 4466

3. Beijing International Car-trading Service Garden

Where: Gucheng Xi Lu, Shijingshan District
Tel: 8892 1513

4. Zhonglian Car-trading Market

Where: 1 Bagou, Haidian District
Tel: 8261 1129

(By Wei Ying)

Police warn expats against illegal employment

By Han Manman

Beijing police last week uncovered a school that illegally hired a foreign teacher and warned other expats to refrain from seeking employment without the proper visa as the number of similar cases continues to rise.

Police last Thursday found dual employment violations at a language school in Changping District. The school is not authorized to hire foreigners, and the foreign teacher lacked proper qualifications for the job, the Public Security Bureau (PSB) said.

The foreigner was identified only by his first name, James, a 20-year-old student. The school's name was not released.

The school's director told police they hired a foreign English teacher to attract more students, while James said the high cost of living in town spurred him to get a part-time job. He said he had been teaching there



Expat employment permits are done at the Municipal Bureau of Labor and Social Security.

CFP Photo

for a month and received 1,000 yuan in salary.

The school was fined 5,000 yuan and James 1,000 yuan.

In May, a kindergarten in Dongcheng District was investigated and later fined 30,000 yuan for illegally hiring four foreign teachers. The foreign-

ers were fined 1,000 yuan each. None of them had any teaching experience prior to the job.

"The easiest job an expat can find when they first get to Beijing is teaching English," said an employee at Wall Street English language school surnamed Chen. "Some of them have a

work visa and some don't," Chen said, adding that small language schools prefer to hire foreign students because they ask for comparatively low pay.

A foreigner, in order to get a work visa, must be at least 18 years old and be sponsored by an organization authorized to hire foreigners, said Lin Song, a press officer at the PSB's administration of exit and entry.

There are not many Beijing companies authorized to hire foreigners. Among kindergartens for instance, only 21 out of 1,300 are allowed to hire foreign teachers, according to a list on the website of the foreign experts' bureau, the organization in charge of foreign employment in the country.

Lin said firms that violate the law face a fine of 5,000 to 50,000 yuan, while unauthorized foreign workers will lose their jobs and be fined up to 1,000 yuan.

Employment procedure

Foreigners who have not obtained a residence permit – holders of F, L, C and G visas – and those who are studying, on internship or dependents of foreign workers with a work visa are forbidden from seeking employment.

In special circumstances, the employer should ask the PSB to change the foreigner's visa status and apply for his or her employment permit and residence permit before work commences.

People intending to work in China must apply for a work visa at a Chinese embassy or consulate abroad, carrying the necessary documents. When the person arrives in China, his or her employer must apply for the Expatriate's Employment Permit at the Municipal Bureau of Labor and Social Security. The employee's passport, work permit and residence permit are required.

Fostering young talent

The mentored German conductor becomes today's maestro



CFP Photo

By He Jianwei

Chinese audiences love German conductor Christoph Eschenbach, whose collaboration with Lang Lang 10 years ago in the US made the pianist world famous.

The German maestro is discerning in his quest for young talent, and he is notoriously unpredictable.

While Eschenbach is famous as an interpreter of Gustav Mahler, he has stricken the composer from his lineup next week at the National Center for the Performing Arts (NCPA), where he will conduct the London Philharmonic Orchestra, because too many people performed Mahler last year.

On August 4, 1999, pianist Andre Watts suddenly fell ill and could not play at the Ravinia Festival. Lang Lang was a last-minute replacement to play the Tchaikovsky Concerto with the Chicago Symphony and Eschenbach.

Lang impressed the audience with his piano skills and became a sensation overnight. Eschenbach's decision made the pianist.

"I was fascinated by his talent and still am. He is a complete musician: not only technically gifted, but above all immensely musical," Eschenbach says.

Lang was not the first young talent he turned into a star. He also helped and supported soprano Keneze Fleming, pianist Tzimon Barto, cellist Claudio Bohorquez and soprano Marisol Montalvo.

For Eschenbach, it is a way to pay back the people who have helped him. "I'd like to support those young musicians and it is my responsibility," he says.

Born in 1940 in Breslau, Germany, Eschenbach had a childhood fraught with misfortune. His mother died in childbirth, leaving him with a "life-long guilt," he says.

He was orphaned during World War II. His father was banished to the front lines by the Third Reich and was killed in battle. Eschenbach was sent to live with his grandmother in Hamburg until they fled an attack on January 23, 1945 and his grandmother died a year later.

1946 was a turning point. Five years of darkness ended when Waldy-dore Eschenbach, his mother's cousin, became his adoptive mother.

"It was during the ensuing long year of my convalescence, a time in which my harrowing past robbed me of my power to speak, that I heard music for the first time," he says.

His adoptive mother was a pianist, singer and music teacher. She played Beethoven, Schubert, Chopin, Rachmaninov and Bach until the late hours. When she asked the little Eschenbach if he wanted to play music, he answered, "Yes."

Music became his outlet. "I felt as if I had been saved, born again," he says.

At age 11 he heard his first symphony when the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, conducted by Wilhelm Furtwangler, toured Kiel. "To this day I can still hear almost every note they played, and still see in my mind's eye Furtwangler, the fascinating presence of that formidable magician, a man capable of setting an entire ensemble of musicians on fire, sending them into a state of ecstasy," he says.

He was determined to be a conductor. Austrian orchestra and opera conductor Herbert von Karajan was Eschenbach's mentor his first 25 years.

The only audition Eschenbach ever gave was for Karajan, who listened to him play for one hour. After that, Karajan invited him to record Beethoven's First Piano Concerto. Hungarian-born American conductor and composer George Szell was another maestro who imparted to Eschenbach a wholly different understanding of score analysis.

Szell arranged Eschenbach's debut in the US by inviting him to perform with the Cleveland Orchestra under Szell's direction in 1969. "I needed to work hard with him first. Our piano rehearsals developed into a close rehearsal relationship," Eschenbach says.

The conductor then invited Eschenbach to accompany him to every city, to every orchestra rehearsal and to every discussion.

"I learned diction from him, phrasing, lucidity, transparency. Karajan

taught me color, nuance, atmospheric transitions. Szell drew while Karajan painted," he says.

In 1981, Eschenbach became the principal guest conductor of the Tonhalle Orchestra Zurich, and was chief conductor from 1982 to 1986.

During his time in Zurich, the orchestra was forking into separate opera and concert orchestras. His first two years passed as the underworked head conductor, and for another two years he enjoyed having no administrative obligations.

But his mentor Karajan criticized that "enjoyment": "He saw in me someone who needed to shape something piece by piece, steadily, brick upon brick, like a large building," Eschenbach says.

Two years later, when he took over the Houston Symphony, Karajan praised him for "becoming what he knew was in me. I was touched." It was a year before Karajan's death.

He has also worked as chief conductors in the North German Radio Symphony Orchestra and the Chicago Symphony Orchestra. He has made more than 80 recordings as piano soloist and conductor.

On his 50th birthday, Eschenbach's other mentor, American conductor and composer Leonard Bernstein, told him the story of a wise-old man who said all life's cycles are based on the number seven, and that after seven times it is time for a sabbatical: a time to find the will to accept what you are becoming and to find room to give yourself up to the unknown.

Unable to grant myself this year of freedom, I spent a good deal of time reflecting on my life, searching for its meaning, ridding it of its last remnants of panic, paranoia and fear," he says.

It brought him two essential discoveries.

"First, my interest in music by contemporary composers was awakened," he says. His old album releases were limited to Bach, Brahms, Mahler, Schuman and Tchaikovsky, but now he included Arnold Schoenberg, Alfred Schnittke and Philip Glass.

"And secondly, more than ever, I was interested in the ever-growing reservoir of young artists and the fostering of their talent — youth as the savior of art so that neither are destroyed by reality."

"It was during the ensuing time in which my harrowing past robbed me of my power to speak, that I heard music for the first time."

London Philharmonic Orchestra Concert

Programs on January 5

Dvorak's *Carnival Overture*, *Symphony No. 8 in G major* and *Symphony No. 9 in E minor*

Programs on January 6

Tchaikovsky's *Overture to Romeo and Juliet*, and *Fancesca da Rimini*, Stravinsky's *The Firebird Suite*, Ravel's *Mother Goose Suite*

Where: Concert Hall, National Center for the Performing Arts, 2 Xi Chang'an Jie, Xicheng District

When: January 5-6, 7:30 pm

Admission: 280-1,380 yuan

Tel: 6655 0000

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wing past robbed me of my power to
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Chinese audiences love Christoph Eschenbach for making a star of Lang Lang 10 years ago.

Photo provided by National Center for the Performing Arts

Agassi's tale of setbacks, victories

By Charles Zhu

Tennis hero Andre Agassi thrilled fans with his ace serves and power-charged hits that brought new life to the game. The former world's best professional American tennis player was an icon of physique and discipline. But his story was never told.

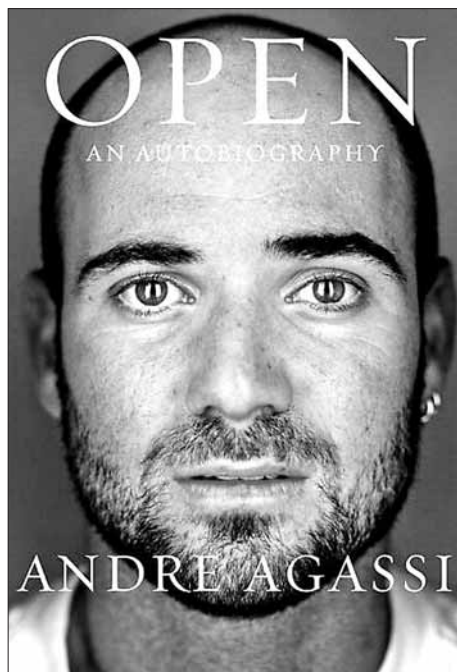
His first biography reveals the seamy side of the game's realities in *Open: An Autobiography* (386pp, Alfred A. Knopf, \$28.95). Behind the family pleasure and travels was family violence, threats and emotional and psychological damage.

Agassi is honest in recalling his shattered childhood, a Dickensian adolescence and his adulthood struggle with alcohol and drugs. His famous matches brought him both the joy of victory and the pain and anxiety of defeat.

Born in Las Vegas to a tyrannical Iranian immigrant, Agassi was forced into the sport at an early age. His father, a former Olympic boxing hopeful, wanted to build a family fortune by making tennis stars of his four children.

As a boy, Andre was asked to hit balls on the backyard court for hours every day. His father, a family terror with indomitable will, barred him from school, friends and play. His sisters were determined to leave the sport and his elder brother had no talent: Andre was his father's only hope.

His father pitted him at age 8 against football great Jim Brown, who bet \$500 he could beat the boy: he lost. Agassi went to Australia



at age 12 with a young American team. For each tournament he won, he was rewarded with a beer. When he was in the seventh grade he was transferred to the Bollettieri Academy in Florida, "Lord of the Flies with forehands" in Agassi's words, where he went through formal, regular tennis training and immensely improved his skills. However, he became wild and led an untamed life. He began to drink hard liquor and smoke dope. Like a hipster, he put on an

earring and eyeliner and sported a mohawk.

In retrospect, Agassi said the academy's owner Nick Bollettieri has no aptitude or experience and does not know how to cope with children in training. As all tennis players used to do, he dropped out of school in ninth grade and turned pro at 16.

Despite his professed love of the game, Agassi laments that he hated tennis from the start – that he hates it still – and that he lacked both option and talent to pursue another career.

Agassi won eight Grand Slam titles, an Olympic gold medal in the men's singles and tens of millions of dollars. But off the court he had no idea who he was. He found himself being defined by brokers, agents and sports writers with only a passing interest in him.

He felt lonely and depressed, and turned to drinking a lot, just as he'd been doing since adolescence. He pursued the actress Brooke Shields who was shallow, materialistic and dense, and who had no interest in his career. The marriage was doomed.

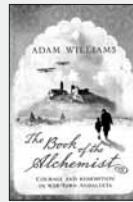
Soon he got lost. He admitted that he began snorting crystal meth in 1997, the worst year of his career. People wonder whether the drug ruined his game or was it in fact what allowed him to come back when his ranking fell out of the top 100. Regardless, the Association of Tennis Professionals ultimately accepted his bogus claim that he accidentally drank a spiked soda.

Agassi has shown emotional tenacity and iron will. He retired from professional tennis on September 3, 2006, after losing in the third round of the US Open. He married fellow tennis player Steffi Graf, started a charity for the education of poor children and refused to ask his kids to play tennis.

"I see everything with bright, startling clarity – every setback, victory, rivalry, tantrum, paycheck, girlfriend, betrayal, reporter, wife, child, outfit, fan letter, grudge match and crying jag," he said.

Bookworm book listing

Vivian Wang from the Bookworm recommends the following best sellers to *Beijing Today* readers.



The Book of the Alchemist

By Adam Williams, 448pp, Hodder & Stoughton General, \$18.99

In the 11th century, as Europe slumbers in the dark ages, Southern Spain is a beacon of enlightenment that draws artists, scientists and philosophers of all faiths. In this haven of tolerance, three boys meet by chance under a fig tree on a hot summer's day. An alchemist, a mason and a prince, they establish a secret brotherhood that will construct a great monument to astonish the world.



Let the Great World Spin: A Novel

By Colum McCann, 400pp, Random House Trade Paperbacks, \$15.00

Late on a summer morning, the people of lower Manhattan stand hushed, staring up in disbelief at the Twin Towers. It is August 1974, and a mysterious tightrope walker is running, dancing and leaping between the towers, suspended a quarter mile above the ground. On the streets below, a slew of ordinary lives become extraordinary in best-selling novelist Colum McCann's stunningly intricate portrait of a city and its people.



The Pool of Unease

By Catherine Sampson, 320pp, Pan Publishing, \$6.99

The scream – feminine, high-pitched, terrified, breathless, a wordless, formless, plea for mercy – arrived from silence and was cut off, abruptly strangled, leaving a gurgling echo in its airy wake. Robin Ballantyne is investigating the murder of a British man in Beijing. Meanwhile, late one freezing night, Chinese private detective Song rescues a young boy from a fire on a building site. But witnesses appear from the murky environs to find bloody clothes on the ground and no body. As the flames blaze, Song panics and flees into the woods – still clutching the boy. Song and Ballantyne must unravel the truth behind the murders before they find themselves silenced – and before the killer's next sinister move.

(By He Jianwei)

Philosopher dissects modern art



By He Jianwei

Philosophers in the West have long explored the

meaning of art. In *The Origin of the Work of Art*, Martin Heidegger defined it as the concepts of being and truth. French philosopher Michel Foucault's writing clarified the role of the modern medium.

Chinese critic Wang Min'an is following the established path in his latest book, *The Factory of Images: How to Look at Contemporary Chinese Art* (349pp, Nanjing University Press, 42 yuan).

Wang is famous for researching post-modernists such as Foucault and Roland Barthes. But the new book turns his attention to con-

temporary Chinese art.

He classifies the work of contemporary artists into 120 key words to provide a new way to understand them and their works.

Many critics look to the past to explain how current artists create, but Wang limits his interpretation to what can be gleaned from a glance. "I only talk about the pieces. I do not discuss the market, ecology and history of contemporary art, and even the artists," Wang said.

Most viewers scan the canvas seeking meaning and expression, but Wang says that is disrespectful. "For

the artists, it is respectful to observe their work rather than ask about their original intention," he said.

Wang samples elements from representative works to analyze each artist's style and writes about how they affected him. In Fang Lijun's paintings, Wang first sees the faces on the canvas, then their expressions and lastly their gestures.

But it is not a guidebook for contemporary Chinese art, he said.

The Factory of Images is a philosopher's gift to artists. Even if readers may not be so interested in art, artists may revel in his interpretation.

When socks become dolls

By Wang Yu

The new year is here, and last year's buzzwords are headed back into obscurity.

The first we would love to bin?

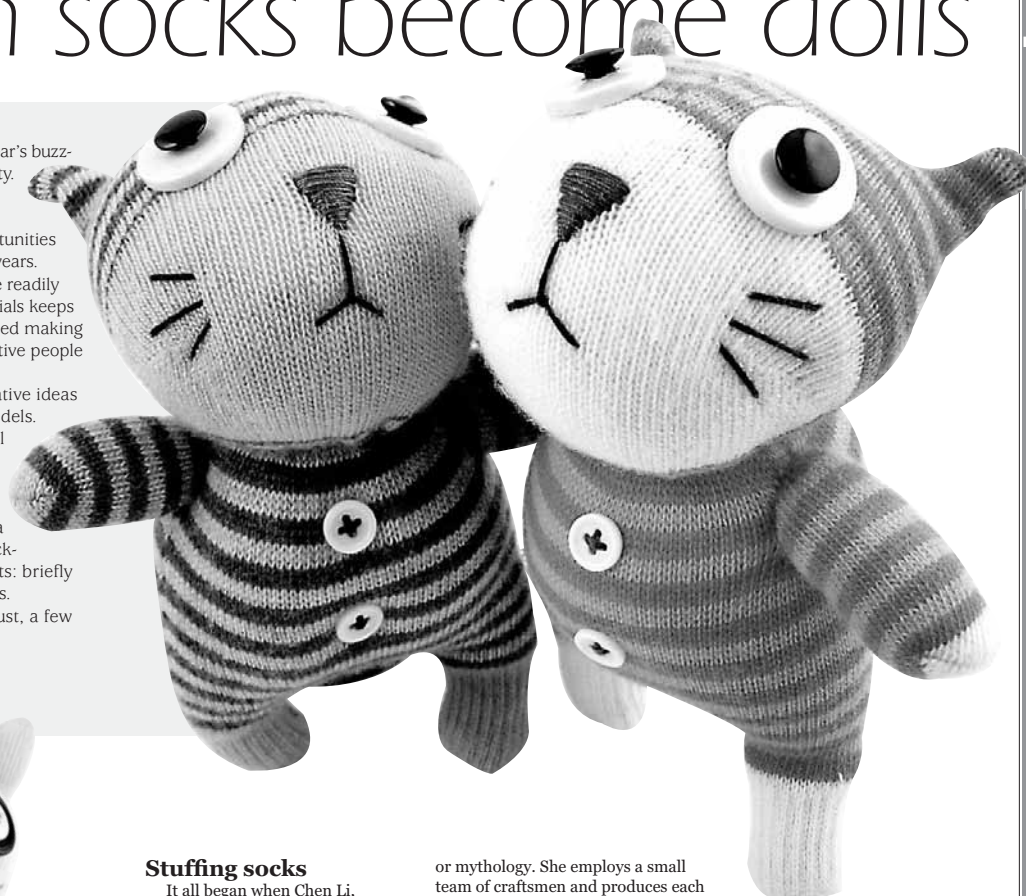
"Creative products."

Sure, iMart brought great opportunities to first-tier cities over the last few years. Now handmade products are more readily available – even if the bill of materials keeps getting stranger. Some people started making handicrafts for fun, and a few creative people got some much-needed exposure.

But overwhelmingly, these creative ideas did not translate into business models.

As handmade items became all the rage, the passion that made handmade goods so worth owning perished. Last year, iMart descended into the equivalent of a flea market with cheap plastic necklaces, Feiyue shoes and sailor shirts: briefly the day uniform of Gulou residents.

But for all the fads that went bust, a few have pulled through.



Chen Li, designer of NO3NO4, says her label does not only sell dolls – it sells her attitude towards life.

Photos provided by Chen Li

Stuffing socks

It all began when Chen Li, designer of the Zhejiang-based popular toy label NO3NO4, was passed a Japanese magazine by her friend. She was struck by its feature on handmade sock dolls.

Most young girls have a doll collection. But for the 28-year-old designer, that love of dolls carried through to adulthood. She grabbed a pair of cotton Adidas socks and made her first sock doll: a cow.

But that was 2006, when sock dolls were still new in Asia. Chen would stay up sewing until 2 am.

It was not long before she quit her job as a DJ despite her parents' protests. As she says, "Sometimes life needs a change."

Chen was born in Wenling, Zhejiang Province. As a child she contracted polio and since age 3 has had to use a wheelchair. Though her father tried everything there was no cure. But Chen credits polio as the source of her optimism – it taught her not to worry about success or failure.

Together with her boyfriend Khrass Feng, a graphic designer, Chen started a doll label in early 2007. At first she was the only crafts-woman in the studio and was left to source socks on her own. "What makes a doll attractive is the pattern on the socks. My inspiration also comes from the colors," Chen says.

More than a doll designer, she was a sock collector.

Her first several dolls sold in a Shanghai store: that was when she decided it was time to expand.

Today, Chen co-operates a factory that makes socks. She then fills and shapes the socks into new designs. Unlike other creative brands, NO3NO4's has no mascot

or mythology. She employs a small team of craftsmen and produces each doll in limited runs of 500.

"Every doll has random details: that is the true spirit of handmade products," Chen says.

How to survive

2008 was the first year Chen felt successful. Dolls by NO3NO4 soon attracted young buyers in big cities and fashion journalists eager to find something creative at the iMart. Her story soon hit print, and a trend magazine helped her get a solo exhibition in Guangzhou.

Feedback rolled in, and-inspired by the French movie *Amélie* – she started to pack the dolls with cards asking for buyers to name and photograph their dolls. The first photo she received was from a young man in Guangzhou: his doll was standing in a flower garden. Before long, Chen found her dolls traveling – from Fifth Avenue in New York to the London Eye.

But the greatest success was in Stockholm in August when Chen and other Chinese designers attended an exhibition. "There is a stereotype that China is just a manufacturing country, with no creativity. But our designs stunned the Swedish audience," Chen says.

The attention brought new opportunities. Swatch asked to co-operate with NO3NO4, and a special edition of her ox doll was issued and offered to watch buyers as a Spring Festival gift. Agents from North America, Europe and Australia also came to Chen, and her dolls can now be found all over the world.

Finding a balance

Compared with other original designs from the iMarts, Chen's story is a miracle.

"We did this simply step by step and didn't worry about success. I stuck to what I liked, and my ideas helped me survive in the local market. I'm sure other dollmakers share my attitude – there is something [about handmade dolls] that copiers cannot offer," Chen says.

But the brand is not as economically successful as many imagine. Chen is still busy every day in her big studio, though she does get out to travel with her boyfriend every six months.

"It's hard to be creative all the time. My way is to be aware of every little thing. Learn from your collection of books, music and movies. Sensitivity breeds creativity," she says.

Staying creative and profitable is a universal problem for artists. After Chen registered her own company, she had to learn managing and accounting.

"When your hobby becomes a business, you have to change. Otherwise the problems will kill your passion and interest. We've gone through some down times, but we pulled through," Chen says.

Balancing design and management may be a tough job, but it is one Chen does well.

She says she is looking to hire a new manager so she can return to the workshop and design all day. But finding a business professional who understands the craft and who is willing to run a company with idealism is tough.

"Right now, I just hope more can enjoy my dolls. We'll worry about the future when it gets here," Chen says.

The right breed of furniture

Durable, stylish and health-friendly pieces for home and work

By Annie Wei

Chain stores that specialize in inexpensive, easy-to-assemble furniture that falls apart sooner than later are the industry's equivalent of fast-food restaurants. If you want a durable, artistically designed bed, sofa or cabinet, more often than not you'll have to part with some hard-earned money.

But what you get in return are pieces that stand the test of time – even potential heirlooms!

A Modern House

A Modern House, located in the Lidu area, might be smaller than your average furniture store, but it's packed to the rafters with classic furniture, lighting fixtures and household items like lighting pendants and tableware.

It has beds, tables, cabinets, stools, as well as a variety of pieces where you can park your behind: sofas, dining chairs, ottomans, benches, bar stools and lounge chairs. The pieces were inspired by popular international designs – minus the paralyzing prices. This is a good place for young professionals and newlyweds to start shopping for their home.

The shop also custom-makes furniture; customers can choose from more than a thousand pieces listed in its digital catalogue or they can bring their own designs. The staff is very helpful and friendly, which makes browsing a joy.

A Modern House

Where: Boutique 2A, Hairun International Condominium, 2 Jiangtai Lu, Jiuxianqiao, Chaoyang District
Open: 10 am – 10 pm
Tel: 5135 8351



Cloud Bookshelf, 3,500 yuan, French brothers Ronan and Erwan Bouroullec designed this shelf.



Outdoor sofa, price to be decided

Health-friendly chairs

The computer is no doubt one of the greatest inventions of the 20th century. It is also one of contemporary life's health hazards. Forget about Internet addiction and radiation: nowadays, more and more people are suffering from neck, back and wrist pain after sitting for extended hours in front of the computer.

Experts suggest a certain posture to relieve pain: maintain a 90-degree angle between your thighs and legs, your thighs and your upper body, as well as your elbow and arms. Your head should be facing forward, not looking down at the screen.

The suggestion sounds simple, but it is hard to follow without the help of specially designed office tables and chairs. However, these do not come cheap. At HOLA home and furniture store, such ergonomically designed chairs cost 8,000 yuan.

But hope is not lost: *Beijing Today* found on ec88.taobao.com similar chairs manufactured by Chinese exporters. Their prices start at 2,000 yuan.

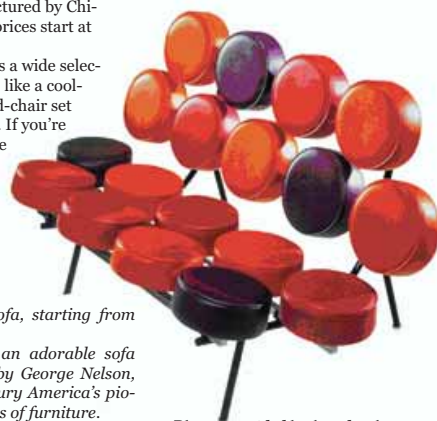
The online shop has a wide selection of other furniture, like a cool-looking office desk-and-chair set going for 25,000 yuan. If you're ever in need of a mouse trap, one is available for 30 yuan.



Brant ergonomic chair, starting from 2,600 yuan Photo provided by google.cn



Snow circle lighting cover, 899 yuan. This is a handiwork of Angus Hutcheson, a well-known British designer.



Marshmallow Sofa, starting from 6,000 yuan
This is part of an adorable sofa series designed by George Nelson, one of 20th century America's pioneering designers of furniture.

Photos provided by Amodernhouse



Romance Table, 4,000 yuan
Created by Neringa Dervinyte for Lithuanian company Contraforma, this pretty table is made from a single piece of powder-coated cold-rolled steel. The outer layer of perforation allows light to shine through and doubles as a playground for shadows. The series includes coffee tables, side tables, lights and cabinets.

For serious drinkers only

Real alcoholic beverages in the age of fakes

By Annie Wei

Locals are only too familiar with horrible hangovers from fake liquor and bad moods from copycat cocktails. To make sure you don't become a "victim," pick bars with a reputation for quality drinks.

To set you on the right path, below is a list of some of these bars that take their drinks seriously.

Cocktails with a classic mix

Apothecary is the newest addition to Sanlitun's overcrowded bar and restaurant scene.

But the bar is off to a good start. The people behind it are dubbed the "super group" of Beijing mixology: Leon Lee, owner of AsiaSamba, Max E. Levy, chef of The Opposite House's Japanese restaurant Bei, and the two wizards behind Er whiskey bar near Lufthansa Center.

Lee said Apothecary promises to bring the capital's cocktail culture to a new level. It offers more than a hundred types of cocktails, which follow popular recipes.

As a restaurant manager in another life, Lee said he discovered that "knowledge was the key to attracting customers," especially Westerners. So Apothecary is not scrimping on information about its offerings: the drinks menu includes a list of each beverage's composition. Lee hopes that "the more customers know, the more they will drink."

One of the bar's most popular cocktails is Pegu Club (60 yuan), a mix of Gordon's gin, cointreau, lime juice, Angostura and orange bitters. It was named after a social club outside Myanmar's former capital Yangon (Rangoon) and included in novels such as Rudyard Kipling's *From Sea to Sea*. The cocktail recipe appeared in the classic *The Savoy Cocktail Book*, published in 1930.

The Secret Cocktail (50 yuan), made with Gordon's gin, lime juice, lime syrup, Angostura bitters and egg white, follows a recipe created in the early 20th century in Philadelphia's landmark Bellevue-Stratford Hotel. "This cocktail is analogous to the Pink Lady as Cinderella is to Snow White. Both are pink but the Secret Cocktail is lighter with egg white sans cream," Apothecary's menu says.

In the bar's sparkling sours and highballs section, customers can try

dark and stormy (55 yuan), a concoction of dark rum and ginger beer with a wedge of lime. The spicy ginger beer and caramelized dark rum make this a fun, refreshing drink.

Apothecary is making an impression with its house-made bitters, an alcoholic beverage that contains herbal essences and is primarily used as a digestif and as flavoring in cocktails. Try its bitters highball (50 yuan), your choice of bitters with house ginger beer, lime syrup and soda.

Martini lovers should not miss Nick and Nora (60 yuan), named after characters in the Thin Man movies of 1930s USA. The drink is better known as a wet martini.

Apothecary also serves food until 1 a.m. Try its Tasmanian oyster Rockefeller (three pieces, 90 yuan) or house-smoked tasso ham with red beans, rice and sliced baguette (50 yuan). Charcuterie platter (good for 4 to 6 people, 125 yuan) contains homemade maple-smoked bacon, andouille sausage and two kinds of tasso ham.

If you're looking for something green, there's the blackened red snapper salad with grilled onions, pomelo and romaine lettuce. All salads are 50 yuan.

The bar, which has light-wood-colored decor and soft lighting, can get crowded on Friday and Saturday nights. So if you want a quiet corner for a chat over classic cocktails, choose a different night.

Apothecary

Where: 3/F, Nali Patio, 81 Sanlitun Bei Lu, Chaoyang District
Open: Tuesday – Saturday, 7 pm – late
Tel: 5208 6040



Apothecary's drinks follow recipes created by top bartenders worldwide.



Homemade bitters



Apothecary's chic bar

Photos by Leon Lee

Other bars to visit

ER

This Japanese whiskey and cocktail bar, which offers a hundred types of whiskeys, features exceptional service and mixing techniques. It's not easy to find bars around the country – even in 5-star hotels – that can match the skill and professionalism exhibited by ER's bartenders.

Where: 1/F, Longbao Dasha, 36 Maizidian Lu, Chaoyang District
Open: 6 pm – 2 am next day
Tel: 6591 5926

Glen Bar

With its collection of 200 whiskeys, this is the quintessential "man's" bar. The bartender is a goldmine of information on whiskey.

Where: 203 Taiyue Suites 16, Nan Sanlitun Lu, Chaoyang District
Open: 6 pm – 2 am next day
Tel: 6591 1191

Ichikura

Enjoy rare whiskeys and cocktails in this quiet and secluded Japanese bar. Its intimate layout is ideal for lovers, close friends or an evening when you want to be alone with your thoughts. The bartender, Kuroki, can also keep you company.



M Bar

Photo provided by Linda Wu

Where: 2/F (entrance via stairs at south wall of Chaoyang Theater), 36 Dongsanhuan Bei Lu, Chaoyang District
Open: 8 pm – late
Tel: 6507 1107

M Bar

A French-designed bar, M Bar is the hideaway of the "who's who" of Beijing, where soothing beats provide a warm and

relaxing ambience in a stylish hall. It sets the pace for live music and entertainment, quality service and innovative cocktails, as well as raises the bar in terms of interior design and decoration. Its design features specially crafted, retro sofas and chic lighting.

Where: 6/F Tower C, Sofitel Wanda Hotel, 93 Jianguo Lu, Chaoyang District
Open: 6 pm – 2 am next day
Tel: 8599 6666 ext. 6525

Q Bar

This is no doubt one of Beijing's most popular cocktail bars, especially in summer, thanks to its well-decorated rooftop. In winter, patrons congregate in its cozy indoor section. The bar is popular for its martinis and innovative drinks.

Where: Top floor of Eastern Inn Hotel, 6 Baijiazhuang Lu, Chaoyang District
Open: 5 pm – 2 am next day
Tel: 6595 9239

Warm indie rock tunes from Montreal

By Wang Yu

Patrick Watson, a Canadian indie rock band, promises to warm up the winter when it performs in Yugongyishan on January 17. The Montreal-based group, which has performed with Feist, The Dears, Phillip Glass and James Brown, is often described as producing "cinematic" and "wildly eclectic" music.

The four-man band's first album, *Close to Paradise*, released in September 2006, went gold in Canada and won numerous awards, including the Polaris Prize. Its international release the next year sold 100,000 copies and introduced Patrick Watson to a wider audience. Live shows followed in New York, London, Paris and Reykjavik, Amsterdam. The group has also created film scores and contributed to Cinematic Orchestra's 2007 album, *Ma Fleur*.

The band's 30-year-old singer, composer, songwriter and producer, from whom the group was named, made his first foray into music with a ska band in high school. In 2001, he released his debut solo album *Waterproof*.

Guitarist Simon Angell, a fellow Quebecois whom Watson met when they were teenagers, complements Watson's melodic



compositions and gut-wrenching falsetto. Ukraine-born Mishka Stein and Swiss-Canadian Robbie Kuster, who met Watson in college, provide the band's whooping rhythms.

The band started when the four musicians were asked to create some music to accompany a book of photography. Having

made a CD to go with all these images, they thought it would be fun to perform them live and it worked really well and people were stunned by the music.

Watson also says that they did not really think they were going to be a band at that point but over a period of five or six years, they got to a point where it became very difficult to change the band's name. "It was not easy to find a name that suited us especially as we had such an eclectic style," he says.

More over, the band is also known for using unusual objects to create music. The artists incorporated a bicycle's whirring sound in the song "Beijing" and used two spoons on an acoustic guitar to produce a tremolo picking effect for "Man Like You."

Beijing fans will finally see the group live after having a free taste of its music online.

Patrick Watson Beijing Concert

Where: Yugongyishan, 3-2 Zhangzizhong Lu, Dongcheng District
When: January 17, 8 pm
Admission: 80 yuan (advance), 100 yuan (at the door)
Tel: 6404 2711

Upcoming

Nightlife

Easy - Peng Tan's new album

Where: MAO Livehouse, 111 Gulou Dong Dajie, Dongcheng District
When: January 6, 8:30 pm
Admission: 100 yuan
Tel: 6402 5080

Stage in February

Concert

New Year's Ode to Joy - Song Fei Erhu Recital

Where: Concert Hall of the National Center for the Performing Arts, 2 Xi Chang'an Jie, Xicheng District

When: February 2, 7:30 pm
Admission: 80-580 yuan
Tel: 6655 0000

Lü Siqing Violin Recital

Where: Concert Hall of the National Center for the Performing Arts, 2 Xi Chang'an Jie, Xicheng District

When: February 26, 7:30 pm
Admission: 80-500 yuan
Tel: 6655 0000

Dance

Sound of Yunnan

Where: Poly Theater, 14 Dongzhimen Nan Dajie, Dongcheng District

When: February 3-5, 7:30 pm
Admission: 180-1,280 yuan
Tel: 6551 8058

Lar Lubovitch Dance Company China Premiere - Mixed Bill I

Where: Theater of the National Center for the Performing Arts, 2 Xi Chang'an Jie, Xicheng District

When: February 3-6, 7:30 pm
Admission: 80-580 yuan
Tel: 6655 0000

The Lady of the Camellias Ballet

Where: Opera House of the National Center for the Performing Arts, 2 Xi Chang'an Jie, Xicheng District

When: February 3-8, 7:30 pm
Admission: 180-1,080 yuan
Tel: 6655 0000

Irish Tap Dance Riverdance Beijing Tour 2010

Where: Beijing Exhibition Theater, 135 Xizhimen Wai Dajie, Xicheng District

When: February 5-11, 7:30 pm
Admission: 180-2,000 yuan
Tel: 6831 6633

Celtic Legends - Irish Tap Dance

Where: Poly Theater, 14 Dongzhimen Nan Dajie, Dongcheng District

When: February 6-8, 7:30 pm
Admission: 80-880 yuan
Tel: 6551 8058

Sleeping Beauty, Nutcracker and Swan Lake by the Russian National Ballet Theater

Where: Poly Theater, 14 Dongzhimen Nan Dajie, Dongcheng District

When: February 16-20, 7:30 pm
Admission: 50-1,000 yuan
Tel: 6551 8058

(By Jackie Zhang)

5 Friday, January 1

Exhibition

60 Years of Sketches at China Central Academy of Fine Arts (CAFA)

Where: CAFA Art Museum, 8 Huajiadi Nan Jie, Chaoyang District

When: Until March 7, daily except Monday, 9:30 am - 5:30 pm

Admission: 15 yuan
Tel: 6477 1575

Spiritual Love for China

Where: 798 Space, 798 Art District, 2 Jiuxianqiao Lu, Chaoyang District

When: Until January 20, daily except Monday, 10 am - 6 pm

Admission: Free
Tel: 5978 180

Nightlife

New Year Concert

Where: Yugongyishan, 3-2 Zhangzizhong Lu, Dongcheng District

When: 8 pm
Admission: 150 yuan
Tel: 400 680 6840



The Verse, Skarving, DH and Chinese Hellcats

Where: MAO Livehouse, 111 Gulou Dong Dajie, Dongcheng District

When: 9:30 pm
Admission: 60 yuan
Tel: 6402 5080

Movie



Crossing Dates

Where: Broadway Cinematheque, T4, North section of MOMA, 1 Xiangheyuan Lu, Dongcheng District

When: 7 pm
Admission: 20 yuan
Tel: 8438 8257 ext. 8008

6 Saturday, January 2

Exhibition

Chen Danqing's Block Print Exhibition

Where: A1-7, 22 International Art Plaza, Pingod Community, 32 Baizhuan Lu, Chaoyang District

When: Until January 8, Monday - Friday, 9 am - 5 pm
Admission: Free
Tel: 5876 0600 ext. 509

Dong Gallery's New Art Show

Where: Dong Gallery, 798 Art District, 2 Jiuxianqiao Lu, Chaoyang District

When: Until February 26, daily except Monday, 10 am - 6 pm
Admission: Free
Tel: 5978 9416

Nightlife



Zhang Yawei at Jianghu Bar

Where: Jianghu Bar, 7 Dong-

mianhua Hutong, Jiaodaokou Nan Dajie, Dongcheng District

When: 9:30 pm
Admission: 40 yuan
Tel: 6401 4611

King Ly Chee's 10th Anniversary

Where: MAO Livehouse, 111 Gulou Dong Dajie, Dongcheng District

When: 8 pm
Admission: 60 yuan
Tel: 6402 5080

Movie



Nufang and the Search for Mermaid in the Desert

Where: Sunday Cafe, 1/F Building C, Fangheng Guoji, 6 Futong Dong Dajie, Chaoyang District

When: 8 pm
Admission: 30 yuan (includes a drink)
Tel: 8478 5882

7 Sunday, January 3

Exhibition

Kazuya Yamamoto Solo Exhibition

Where: Noda Contemporary Beijing, G01, 2 Red Courtyard, Caochangdi, Chaoyang District

When: Until January 24, daily except Monday, 10 am - 6 pm
Admission: Free
Tel: 5127 3187

The 11th National Exhibition of Fine Arts

Where: National Art Museum of China, 1 Wusi Dajie, Dongcheng District

When: Until February 3,

daily, 9 am - 5 pm
Admission: 20 yuan
Tel: 6400 1476

Nightlife



Ecke - Wu Xueying

Where: Wild Strawberry Cafe, 52 Houhai Nanyan,

Dongcheng District
When: 8 pm
Admission: 30 yuan
Tel: 8328 4250

Hong Qi, He Li, Zhang Jing

- First round of 2010 Song-zhuang Music Tour

Where: MAO Livehouse, 111 Gulou Dong Dajie, Dongcheng District

When: 8 pm
Admission: 50 yuan
Tel: 6402 5080

Movie

Electric Shadows

Where: Penghao Theater, 35 Dongmianhua Hutong, Jiaod-

aokou Nan Dajie, Dongcheng District

When: 2 pm
Admission: 30 yuan
Tel: 6400 6452



The 11th National Exhibition of Fine Arts at National Art Museum of China

Winter may be murder for your mouth

Wrinkles more a worry for women

Women have long lamented the cruelty of aging. Recent studies have proven that women do age faster than men, at least when it comes to perioral wrinkles.

The study, pioneered by Dr. Emma Paes of the Department of Plastic, Reconstructive and Hand Surgery at the University Medical Center in Utrecht Netherlands, was intended "to obtain new insight into the perception that women wrinkle earlier and more severely than men" in order to understand "the reasons for differences in wrinkling between women and men."

The study identified a number of reasons why women experience more and deeper wrinkles than their male counterparts. Contributing factors were that women's skin contains fewer sebaceous glands and fewer blood vessels.

Sebaceous glands secrete sebum, which is a waxy and oily substance. This substance may play a role in protecting the skin, and when less is produced, more wrinkles may occur. The smaller number of blood vessels is also important, as it results in a less vascularized skin that allows wrinkles to develop more quickly. Finally, the muscle fibers surrounding the mouth are attached more closely in women than men, and thus an inward traction may occur that makes wrinkles appear more deeply in women.

The study was published in the November-December issue of the *Aesthetic Surgery Journal*.

Paes said she hopes the findings may help "develop better strategies for the treatment of perioral wrinkles." Wrinkles are currently treated with toxin injections like Botox or Dysport, lasers, injectable wrinkle fillers, dermabrasion and chemical peels. While many of these treatments are moderately effective, there is still a ways to go.

"Sometimes one has to go back to the basics" in order to determine "the reasons why a particular treatment may or may not be effective," she said.

The study was conducted using skin surface replicas from 10 male and 10 female cadavers between the ages of 75 and 93. An additional 15 male and female cadavers provided full thickness lip resections to add further data to the study. Skin samples were examined using a blind experiment.

By Li Zhixin

Ever wonder how Angelina Jolie maintains such pouty lips?

Lips beautify the face. Nothing in the world can be more repelling than an ugly pout with chapped and wrinkled lips.

But there is bad news for women: a recent study found that women are more prone to wrinkles around lips than men are.

Preventing early perioral wrinkles

No one wants to see wrinkles when they look in the mirror. "Wrinkles can come on at any time in your life — especially if you are a smoker. Usually your skin begins to wrinkle around your lips as you age," said Wang Zhongjie, doctor of the Plastic Surgery and Skin Care Center at Air Force General Hospital. "Wrinkles are hard to get rid of, preventing them is easier."

There are several ways to eliminate wrinkles around your mouth. "Whatever wrinkle treatments you use on other areas of your face will also work on and around the lips," she said.

1. Common solutions

Always use a lipstick or lip gloss that hydrates and contains sunscreen to help prevent wrinkles.

"One homemade product that can be used to treat these unsightly lines is made of banana and honey. Make a paste of ripe bananas and honey, apply it on the wrinkled area and leave it on for about 10 minutes. Once firm, remove the paste and apply some good moisturizer," Wang said.

Try to relax. Tension usually shows up in your face. "When your face holds a worried expression over and over for too long it can cause your face to wrinkle," she said. Relaxing your mouth will help prevent wrinkles.

2. Exfoliate

Remove dead skin cells by exfoliating your skin twice a week. As the dead cells are removed, new cells replace them, giving the skin a very smooth appearance. Also, the skin will be more ready to absorb any therapeutic cream, giving immediate and faster results. Even moisturizers are absorbed more easily when the skin is properly exfoliated.

3. Use creams to prevent wrinkles

Anti-wrinkle creams applied to the upper lip can help prevent deep wrinkles.

"Use a cream that has hydroxyl acids in it or one that you can get from your dermatologist called Retin-A. Both of these creams work to reduce wrinkles around your lips," she said.

Hydroxy acids gently strip the skin's wrinkled layers while Retin-A regenerates cells.

4. Avoid harsh cleansers and soaps

Do not use harsh cleansers or soaps on your face. Some cleansers and soaps have the tendency to dry out your skin and cause wrinkles. Try using a moisturizing cleanser or soap.

It is best to keep your skin hydrated. After you clean your face make sure to use a good moisturizer that will help prevent wrinkles on your face. This will keep it smooth and healthy looking.

5. Avoid sunlight and extreme weather

Wrinkles are also "helped" along by exposure to sunshine or wind, which affect the skin in an extreme way. Take precautions to protect that part of the skin from ultraviolet rays and wind.

The less you are exposed to harmful rays, the more quickly cells will regenerate.

6. Chemical peels and laser treatments

Both chemical peels and laser treatments can remove the top layer of skin around your lips. When these layers are removed your skin will look younger and the wrinkles will disappear.

"It is best to consult your dermatologist about what type of chemical peel to use. You do not want to use a strong treatment that will harm your skin instead of help it," she stressed.

Laser treatment, which must be performed by a dermatologist, can encourage the skin to produce more collagen. These treatments are very successful for removing wrinkles.



Tips for lip care

- 1. Take a water bottle.** Drinking enough water will keep the body, skin and lips hydrated.
- 2. Do not lick your lips.** Licking your lips damages the protective barrier, which can dry out the lips. Saliva contains digestive enzymes that can break down this barrier.
- 3. Use a humidifier.** It can replace moisture in the dry indoors. Moist air keeps lips and skin hydrated.
- 4. Use balms.** Look for hydrating ingredients like beeswax, Shea butter, vitamin E and almond, jojoba or coconut oils. Good old petroleum jelly like Vaseline works well too. If you have sensitive skin, use camphor-based medicated lip balms sparingly.
- 5. Do not overuse matte lipsticks.** Matte lipsticks can be extremely drying. Use them sparingly when your lips are chapped. Alternate with hydrating lipsticks or put a layer of moisturizing lip balm underneath.

Secrets of the manufacturing world

Tours of wine, cashmere and juice factories

By Zhang Dongya

Beijing's last International Cultural & Creative Industry Expo (ICCIE), held in November, promoted industrial tours suitable for the bitter cold winter, when sightseeing is better done indoors.

This week we introduce three tours, with more to come in the next issues. Visitors will enter the little-known world of manufacturing – one that plays an indispensable part of everyday life and is key to the country's economic success.

Beijing wine culture

Longhui, or Dragon Seal, is a winemaker established when the Qing Dynasty (1616-1911) was coming to an end, during the reign of its last emperor Puyi (1908-1912). The brand prides itself on its French-tasting red and white wines.

In 2006, the company built a wine museum in its factory on Yuquan Road, Haidian District – the only museum in town that documents Beijing's hundred-year-old history of winemaking.

The museum, done in Qing architecture, has two floors: one above and one below ground. On the ground floor is the exhibition hall, which presents the birth and development of Beijing wine. Displays include handmade, semi-automatic and automatic winemaking tools – innovations during their time.

A few meters away is the "production area," which features a display of special Longhui wines and bottles from other popular domestic brands, such as Chuangyu and Great Wall. It also has a bar where visitors can take a sip of different wines and a souvenir machine that can put their thumbprint on a chosen wine label. Tourists get a discount on wine purchases.

The basement contains the cellar and wine vats. Museums guides explain the best methods to store wine.

People interested in wine production can visit Longhui's production line, which has a glass-covered passage for tourists.

The museum prefers group tours since it has a shortage of guides. But you will learn a lot if you get one: besides introducing the museum, they also share general wine knowledge, such as its different categories and proper wine tasting.

Dragon Seal Wine Company

Where: 2 Yuquan Lu, Haidian District

Getting there: Take Subway Line 1 to Yuquanlu station, then transfer to Bus 530 or Special Bus 10 to Fuyukou Bei stop

Open: Monday – Friday, 8:30 am – 5:30 pm; weekends 9 am – 4 pm
Admission: 30 yuan
Tel: 8863 5695

Local cashmere pioneer

Beijing's first cashmere sweater was produced 45 years ago by Snow Lotus, the country's first state-owned manufacturer of cashmere products. Now, the company spins 400 metric tons of cashmere yarn a year and knits a million cashmere pieces. Its products are sold nationwide, as well as in US and European markets.

Continued on page 21...



Local winemaker Longhui produces French-tasting red and white wines.



The museum has an exhibition hall with winemaking tools on display.



Longhui built a museum in 2006, which documents Beijing's hundred-year-old history of winemaking.



Visitors can learn the best methods to store wine on a stop at Longhui's cellar.

Photos provided by Dragon Seal Wine Company



... continued from page 20

Snow Lotus' factory, located in Yinghai Industrial Park in Daxing District, opened its doors to tourists in August. Visitors see each part of its production: the washing and dehairing of raw fibers, dyeing and spinning and knitting and finishing. Factory guides explain the history of cashmere manufacturing.

Visitors are taught how to detect quality cashmere products. First, check the label to see if it's pure cashmere or cashmere mixed with other materials; the higher the percentage of cashmere, the softer the product. Next, slide the material between your fingers to test its flexibility. Lastly, feel it against your face; it should be smooth and silky. Authentic cashmere products have a bright, fresh-looking color.

The factory has a section where it sells sweaters and scarves for both sexes. Tourists get 35 to 40 percent discount.

The building's huge dining hall also provides visitors a buffet meal for 30 yuan.

Near the factory are other attractions: Beiputuo Cinema City and Beijing Deer Park.

Snow Lotus Cashmere Company

Where: 1 Yinghai Industrial Park, Yinghai Town, Daxing District

Getting there: Take Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) 1 to Demaozhuang stop, then transfer to bus 341, 526 or 926 to Sanhuaitang stop. The factory is another hundred meters to the east.

Open: 8 am - 4:30 pm

Admission: Free

Tel: 6927 4270

Juice-drinking tour

Huiyuan, established in 1992, is one of the country's largest juice producers and holds the biggest share of the domestic fruit and vegetable juice market.

In 2001, the company welcomed tours to its Beijing compound. The itinerary includes a visit to its plant and convention center.

The nine-year-old convention center hosts conferences, performances, exhibitions and film screenings. Here, visitors are shown a 10-minute video clip of Huiyuan's history and samples of its various products. Best of all, visitors can sample its newest and most popular beverages.

The plant includes an office building, a research and development center and a recreation center. Beside it are an orchard and a man-made river.

Visitors also check out Huiyuan's production zone, where they learn the process of juice making, including the disinfecting and filling of bottles and cartons.

The compound includes numerous conference halls, which can seat from 50 to 800 people. Its dining hall has a capacity of 500.

The last stop is the supermarket, which contains hundreds of Huiyuan products. Tourists get a discount of 20 to 30 percent.

Huiyuan Beverage and Food Group

Where: Huiyuan Lu, Beixiaoying Town, Shunyi District

Getting there: Take Bus 915 Sub-line 3 to Beixiaoyingdong stop

Open: 8 am - 5 pm

Admission: 10 yuan

Tel: 6048 7888



Visitors to Snow Lotus see the complete process of producing cashmere: the washing and dehairing of raw fibers, dyeing and spinning and knitting and finishing.



Tourists get a discount on sweater and scarf purchases in Snow Lotus' shop.



Visitors learn about juice production on a visit to Huiyuan's factory.

Photo provided by Huiyuan Beverage and Food Group



Snow Lotus, established in 1964, is Beijing's first cashmere-sweater producer.

Photos provided by Snow Lotus Cashmere Company

Dining



House of mojito magic

Havana has a range of house mojitos, done the Latin American way.

Where: Havana, Grand Millennium Beijing, Fortune Plaza, 7 Dongsanhuan Zhong Lu, Chaoyang District

When: 5 pm – 1 am next day
Tel: 8587 6888 ext. 3015

Celebrate Spring Festival

Gloria Plaza Hotel Beijing has a series of sumptuous lunch and dinner sets for you to share with friends and family. Have a joyous reunion dinner and share blessings with all you hold dear.

Where: Gloria Plaza Hotel Beijing, 2 Jianguomen Nan Dajie, Chaoyang District

When: Until February 28
Tel: 6515 8855 ext. 2155



New Year set menu

As Chinese New Year nears, the Crowne Plaza Beijing Zhongguancun is celebrating with three traditional New Year set menus. Options include an exciting Chinese New Year package, an elegant private party or an attractive range of dishes at Rouge Restaurant.

Where: Crowne Plaza Beijing Zhongguancun, 106 Zhichun Lu, Haidian District
Tel: 5993 8888 ext. 2316 or 2317

Spa



Lovers' getaway

Celebrate Valentine's Day with a spa getaway to express your love. The package starts with an hour of aroma fusion massage, an hour-long Pure Radiance Facial for her and an hour-long Ocean Facial for him. Enjoy the whirlpool at the end of this romantic time.

Where: The JW Marriott, 83 Jianguo Lu, Chaoyang District
Cost: 1,620 yuan per couple, 15 percent surcharge
Tel: 5908 6688

Tourism

Greek Valentine's Day

Greeks celebrate Valentine's Day by giving each other cards with a picture of Eros, the god of love. This year, the holiday coincides with the end of the new year's holiday discounts. Shopping dates may be a fantastic way for young couples to enjoy the last day for big bargains.

Aviation

Jetstar starts first mainland services with Haikou

Jetstar is beginning weekly services to the mainland with an inaugural flight to Haikou. The company is promising to beat any fares (not counting JetFlex fares) by 10 percent. Notify Jetstar of the better rate by calling its 24-hour call center at 800-6161-977. Once verified, Jetstar will offer a 10 percent discount if the caller books immediately.

Garuda Indonesia opens service to Europe

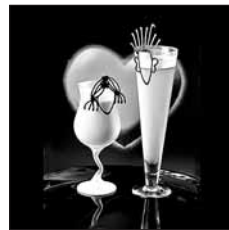
Starting June 1, Garuda Indonesia will reopen its Jakarta-Amsterdam service. The route will be served by an A330-200 with one layover in Dubai, United Arab Emirates.



Singapore Airlines flies to Munich

Starting March 28, Singapore Airlines will begin direct flights to Munich, Germany's third-largest city. The flights will depart Singapore on Tuesdays, Thursdays, Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays in a Boeing 777-300ER aircraft. Customers traveling on the new route can enjoy the airline's latest cabin offerings.

Hotel



Cocktail Attitude – Simply Love

A much tastier way to woo your loved one is with a love cocktail at Cloud Nine, Shangri-La Beijing. From January 11, the new selection of luscious beverages covers everything from fruity juice to creative cocktails, with a twist.

Where: Cloud Nine, Shangri-La Beijing, 29 Zizhuyuan Lu, Haidian District

When: January 11 – February 28, 3 pm – 1 am next day
Tel: 6841 2211 ext. 6723

(By Jackie Zhang)



Asia's top hotel for 4th year

Readers of *Condé Nast Traveler*, a US travel publication, voted China World Hotel Beijing as one of the 100 best in Asia in the magazine's annual Readers' Choice Awards published last November 2009.

China World Hotel was one of the first three hotels on the mainland to be awarded a Platinum Five-Star rating by the China National Tourism Administration (CNTA). It was also named by *Travel + Leisure* recognized as one of the world's best hotels.

First Gloria Hotels & Resorts affiliate in Tokyo

Gloria Hotels & Resorts has a new management module which gives standalone hotels access to the services of Gloria Hotels & Resorts Group. Ginza Capital Hotel Tokyo Japan has recently joined the program as the first affiliate.

Kempinski goes Euro with remarkable flair

Kempinski is presenting European life with innovative concepts and a new look and feel. These include Beauty with Kempinski The SPA, Culture with the Kempinski Ball, Savoir Vivre with Lady in Red and Gourmet with new foods and drinks. The hotel promises these will offer guests a unique experience. These will soon be available at all 60 of Kempinski's worldwide locations and its 44 projects under development.

Event

Ladies drink free 9 pm-midnight

Alfa, known for hosting '80s parties the last five years, is stepping into the next decade. Every Saturday, Alfa will celebrate the craziness and tackiness of the 90s. From Nirvana to Oasis with a strong mix of Ace Of Base, the Real McCoys and Madonna in between. If you want to smell something like teen spirit, just "come as you are."

Where: Alfa, 6 Xingfu Yicun (alley opposite north gate of Workers' Stadium), Chaoyang District
Tel: 6413 0086

Punk Beijing

Internationally renowned DJ/producer Stretch Armstrong is coming soon for an encore at Punk Beijing, his "home in China."

When: January 16
Tel: 6410 5230

(By Sun Feng)

Chinglish story

This column focuses on Chinglish mistakes in our daily life. If you have any experiences to share, send them to Wang Yu at wangyu2008@ynet.com.

Never try to get a room with your boss



By Huang Daohen

To work at a multinational company like Procter & Gamble, Intel or Google, is one of the biggest dreams of Chinese graduates. They equate it with a high salary, a bright future and work that is both challenging and exciting.

That dream came true for my friend Catherine. After she finished university three years ago, she was immediately hired as an executive secretary by a well-known US-based law firm. I was not surprised; Catherine's English was among the best in our class, she scored high on the exams and received numerous scholarships. But a young Chinese woman like her who had never lived abroad had a hard time adjusting to the work environment, which brought together colleagues from all corners of the globe.

"If you're not careful, you might suddenly find yourself facing a sexual harassment complaint," Catherine said during our class's get-together

last week. But cultural differences were the biggest source of headaches, she said.

"Whatever, we're more interested in sexual harassment!" Tom, a classmate, interrupted jokingly.

Sexual harassment cases in multinationals have become a hot topic after a woman recently won a lawsuit against her former Japanese boss. The boss of the Guangzhou firm was ordered to issue her a written apology and pay her 3,000 yuan in damages.

Catherine told us a work-related story that was hilarious and educational, yet extremely embarrassing. One busy Monday afternoon, her boss Edward strode out of his office and called everyone to an emergency meeting on one of the firm's biggest projects, "Nover." It was at a critical stage that everyone had been working overtime on it the past month.

"When Edward announced the meeting, the whole office went still. You could almost hear people's heartbeat accelerating," Catherine said.

Catherine realized she needed to book a meeting room immediately. She yelled out to the office assistant: "Lilian, get a room for Edward and me. Hurry!" The entire room burst into laughter, leaving Catherine confused.

After the meeting, an American colleague explained to Catherine her gaffe: "get a room." In Chinese the phrase translates into *dīng fang*, or "to book a meeting room." But in English, it can mean to book a hotel, or a similar, room for sexual activity. It's also used to express exasperation toward couples who engage in excessive public displays of affection.

"Next time you see a couple lovey-dovey over dinner, tell them, 'Get a room!'" Catherine said with a laugh.

Catherine also advised us to be careful we don't say "get laid," which is the equivalent of *tang hui'er*, to take a noonday nap. To Westerners, the phrase is what successfully happens once a couple gets a room.

Blacklist

This is a column of words or phrases commonly misused by Chinese speakers. If you're planning to be an English teacher, reporter or employee of a multinational company, then watch out for this page each week.

1. Next to

Professor Zhu Shida (ZS): Once, I came across the sentence "Next to Mailer, he is not a novelist of any significance" and I could not make out its meaning. "Next" can be an adverb, adjective and preposition. "Next to" can mean "nearest to," for instance, Bobby is next to John in age. It can also mean "Almost, nearly," for instance, It was thought next to impossible. However, after I consulted an English dictionary, my puzzlement was resolved. It appears that "next to" can also mean "as compared to." For instance, Next to her I felt like a nonentity. It means: If I am compared to her, I felt like a nonentity. If we proceed from this interpretation, then, it will not be difficult to understand the sentence I cited here. It means, As compared with Mailer, he is not a novelist of any significance.

Native speaker Steven Sandor (SS):

While "Next to Mailer" can have a meaning like "compared to," it is probably not the first meaning readers will hit on. As a general rule, it is best to avoid using words which also have spatial meanings when another word is more precise: "The bird flew over the park," but "I got more than \$20." In this case, "Compared to Mailer" would have avoided all confusion.

2. Macau celebrated 10 years since its return to China.

ZS: Macau was celebrating the yearly return of a special date or occasion, that is its return to China. Then, it should be "anniversary." If we say the 25th wedding anniversary, it means that the couple has married for 25 years and they are celebrating the yearly return of the day on which they got married 25 years ago. So, The Macau people were not celebrating the 10 years, but the special date of the year which marked its return to China. I found many of the beginners are fairly prone to commit this error in expressing this particular idea. For this sentence, it should be: Macau celebrated the 10th anniversary of its return to China.

SS: Macau celebrated for 10 years after it returned to China ... but then the joy ended. Well, probably not, but that's how this sentence sounds. It would be more correct to say, "Macau celebrated its 10th anniversary of reunion." Why not be really fancy and show off your vocab by saying, "Macau celebrated the decennial of its reunion?"

3. Devote it to preserve cultural heritage

ZS: This is wrong. What's wrong? Can you discern it? It is in the usage of the verb to devote. As we know, "devote" is a transitive verb, meaning to give up oneself or one's money, time, energy or efforts to some person, purpose or service. We have an example here and we will try, based on it, to analyze things: The mother devoted herself to her children. We have a sample of "one devotes oneself to someone." If we wish to express an idea involving an action, what will happen? We will have to say: The mother devoted herself to taking care of the children. You see, you will have to use the participle instead of the infinitive. So, similarly, the sample should be: Devote it to preserving cultural heritage.

SS: In addition to the professor's correction, I would say that the command "devote it to preserving cultural heritage" is something you will unlikely hear spoken. There is too much of this fragment missing to determine what the author meant. It is possible someone's spell checker erroneously suggested "devote it" as the correction for some corruption of "devoted."

Chinglish on the way

This column aims to identify Chinglish in public areas. If you see any Chinglish signs, please send a picture of it to wangyu2008@ynet.com together with your name and address.

On the taxi the guest stands forward

By Tiffany Tan

This sign is advocating some dangerous motoring behavior: standing on the taxi roof – and doing it at the roof's edge. A less serious offense, but nevertheless a transgression, is locals' lack of hospitality. Imagine asking foreign guests to stand during a car ride! This is a good way to kill the inbound tourism industry.

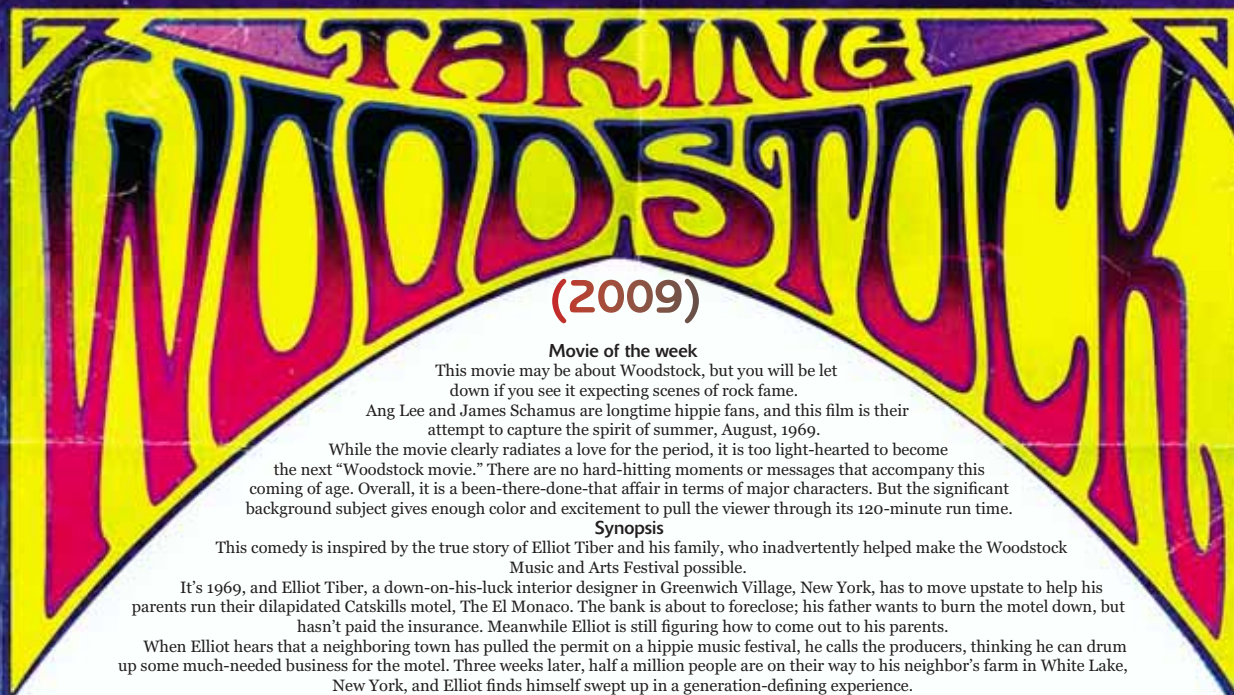
It's a New Year and our mission to battle Chinglish continues (although sometimes we live and let live). In Chinese it's saying, "location for taxi passengers." It's pretty simple, really. It means to say taxi stand, which in various parts



of the world is also known as taxi rank, cab stand, cab rank, or hack stand.

I think the sign was aiming for "Guests line up here for taxi." In this case you can say, taxi queue.

Sometimes the simplest English words or phrases get mangled – the same way foreigners like me mutilate the simplest and most beautiful Chinese expressions. This is language giving us an insight into the tangled web we create of life. Thankfully there's a new day, a New Year to learn lessons – both philosophically and linguistically!



Movie of the week

This movie may be about Woodstock, but you will be let down if you see it expecting scenes of rock fame.

Ang Lee and James Schamus are longtime hippie fans, and this film is their attempt to capture the spirit of summer, August, 1969.

While the movie clearly radiates a love for the period, it is too light-hearted to become the next "Woodstock movie." There are no hard-hitting moments or messages that accompany this coming of age. Overall, it is a been-there-done-that affair in terms of major characters. But the significant background subject gives enough color and excitement to pull the viewer through its 120-minute run time.

Synopsis

This comedy is inspired by the true story of Elliot Tiber and his family, who inadvertently helped make the Woodstock Music and Arts Festival possible.

It's 1969, and Elliot Tiber, a down-on-his-luck interior designer in Greenwich Village, New York, has to move upstate to help his parents run their dilapidated Catskills motel, The El Monaco. The bank is about to foreclose; his father wants to burn the motel down, but hasn't paid the insurance. Meanwhile Elliot is still figuring how to come out to his parents.

When Elliot hears that a neighboring town has pulled the permit on a hippie music festival, he calls the producers, thinking he can drum up some much-needed business for the motel. Three weeks later, half a million people are on their way to his neighbor's farm in White Lake, New York, and Elliot finds himself swept up in a generation-defining experience.

Scene 1

(Elliot Tiber's family motel is heading for bankruptcy after its latest negotiations with the bank. He returns to New York, where his sister is waiting.)

Elliot Tiber's sister (S): There you are.

Elliot Tiber (E): Hi, Sis.

S: How did it go at the bank?

E: How do you think it went? Till the end of the summer, that's it.

S: What about the money those mobsters (1) owe you ... for that nightclub you designed?

E: They have a surprisingly strict policy about paying designers. They don't. You want some more paintings?

S: No, I already have 10 of them. And you know Joe hates them ... Of course you're broke after all the money you've sunk into (2) that hellhole (3) of theirs. And I bet Ma's never even said a word of thanks, has she?

E: No, but I can sense it. The special way she sometimes looks at me with just her left eye, you know.

S: Elliot. Now is your time to go to California like you've always wanted ... to paint and design. Be free, stop throwing your life away up there.

E: I can't give up on them now.

S: Why not?

E: I'm the one they still want around. I guess that means they love me more than you.

S: That must be a great consolation (4) to you.



Scene 2

(Elliot finds Billy, a Vietnam veteran who is back in town, in the woods.)

Billy (B): Take cover, man.

E: Billy. What is it?

B: We're surrounded, man. Can't you feel it? It's like, when the radio was busted and we fraggled (5) that sergeant so then they just leave us out here. But someone's gotta go back and call in air support 'cause I gotta stay with O'Connor. He doesn't have any feet, man.

E: It's okay, Billy. The radio's working in the office. I can call from there. And you can cover me, right? And I'll do some recon with the squad, they can send up some reinforcements and the VC will never see me. And I can call in the coordinates.

B: What are you talking about, Elliot?

E: I don't know. I thought maybe I could be in your flashback or something. If it made you feel any better.

B: That's cool.

E: You all right?

B: Man, I am f--ked up. You think I should take those pills they gave me at the VA? I should probably just take

those pills but then I just sleep all the time and then there's the nightmares. Never thought I'd end up back here.

E: Me neither.

B: I'm thinking, maybe I should do another tour.

E: That doesn't sound like such a good idea.

B: Over in Vietnam, I'm normal. Do you know what I'm saying? Hey, you should join up.

E: Me?

B: Yeah.

E: No. They wouldn't take me even if I wanted. Flat feet.

B: Right ... Feet. Yeah, you're not normal, Elliot.

E: No. I guess not.

B: All I know is we're surrounded here.



Scene 3

(Young people start moving to the village. Vilma, a gay cross dresser and member of Elliot's crew, talks with the young organizer.)

Vilma (V): Your dad says you're a painter.

E: When did he say that?

V: I had him give me a tour of the property, you know, getting a lay of the land. He talked a lot about you, about Brooklyn. He showed me some of his favorite places, the oaks down by the lake. Nice.

E: Wait. Are you sure that was my dad? Maybe it was somebody else's? I mean, he doesn't have any favorite places here, he hates it. He doesn't talk.

V: I didn't say it was therapy or anything, you know. It was just chatting.

E: Chatting? His mind must be going (6).

V: Don't worry, Elliot. I'll keep an eye on him. If he starts to laugh or smile or anything suspicious like that ... I'll let you know.

E: Yeah. You do that.

V: In fact, I have to go collect his bat, we've got dawn patrol.

E: Vilma? Does my dad know, you know, what you are?

V: Elliot. I know what I am. That does make it easier for everyone else, doesn't it?

Vocabulary

1. **mobster:** slang for gangster
2. **sink into:** to invest time or money
3. **hellhole:** a place of wretchedness or squalor
4. **consolation:** comfort
5. **fraggled:** military slang for kill or wound with an explosive
6. **mind must be going:** approaching senility

(By Wang Yu)